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The Christian conception of holiness



THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF HOLINESS



# THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF HOLINESS

BY

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## PREFACE.

THE thought of this essay is original. Yet it seems to me to be the logical outcome of some of the ethical and theological thought of our day. In publishing the book I do so in the hope that what is here written may seem to others as profoundly true as it does to myself, and that it may serve to restore the faith to some who, amid the unrest of the time and the unsettlement of old opinions, have felt the need of a restatement of the eternal Gospel of Christ in the language of modern thought.

My thanks are due to the Rev. F. R. Tennant, of Gonville and Caius College, for kindly reading through the proof-sheets.

E. H. A.

CAMBRIDGE, *March*, 1900.



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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTORY



## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

IT is the purpose of this essay to set forth the answer contained in the Christian Revelation to the question which Moral Philosophy has asked, and must ask: What is the rationale of man's moral nature? The answer to this question will be found in the conception of Holiness as we have it in the New Testament. What that conception is, and how it was foreshadowed in the Old Testament, I hope to shew in the following chapters.

But it is obvious that it is useless to attempt to answer any question, unless the meaning of it be first apprehended. It will be necessary then to devote the earlier chapters of this essay to a preliminary enquiry into the principles of Ethics; for only so can we see the real purport of the problem, the solution of which is required. But while an incursion into the region of the science of ethics is a desideratum in order that we may get a clear notion of the question at issue, I wish to state plainly that this essay is not intended to be a treatise on ethics. It

is primarily concerned with dogmatic theology, which it will utilise for the supply of an answer to the question propounded by Moral Philosophy.

And it is important to make a clear distinction between ethics as a *science* and ethical or moral *philosophy*. It belongs to the science of ethics to discover from observation, including of course introspection, since it is man himself that is to be observed, what man's moral nature is, and to come at the facts of the moral life. This is science. But moral philosophy, starting from an already acquired knowledge of the facts, proceeds to question their meaning, and to come at their reason. And in speaking of their reason we mean something other than their cause. Science concerns itself with cause and effect; philosophy seeks to penetrate into the reason of things, to come at their meaning, their  $\tau\epsilon\lambda\sigma$ .

Confusion must inevitably arise when science and philosophy are not clearly discriminated. It is the function of both of these to enter into the reason of things; but this word 'reason' is somewhat elastic, and care must always be exercised to have clearly before the mind the sense attaching to it in any particular connection. When we speak of the scientific reason of any thing, we mean what we may call its reason retrospectively; but the reason of things as philosophy has to do with them is their prospective reason. When science questions the Why of a phenomenon, it is that it may discover its cause, and the means by which it has come about; but when philosophy asks the Why of things, it seeks

rather to know whereto they are directed, for what purpose they are. We might illustrate the distinction by saying that a reason of the eye to the philosopher is sight; but this would not be a scientific reason for the eye. For science would want rather to get at the stages by which the eye came to be, and to know why, the eye being formed, it is formed as it is; and why, being what it is, it is an instrument of sight. We sometimes say that we do not see the reason of a phenomenon, and by this we mean that we do not understand its cause, what has made it to happen. This would be the reason in the scientific sense of the word. But when we say that we do not see the good or use of something in nature, we express our ignorance of the philosophical reason of it.

Now it may seem to some minds that philosophy is pure speculation, and that we can never know whether the conclusions of the speculation are correct or not. Science on the other hand is sure, and its results verifiable. It is the case that some scientific minds are prejudiced against philosophy which it seems to them but waste of time to pursue, carrying us, as it does, into regions where we are lost through our inability to verify what we have guessed at. But the fact remains that the human mind is naturally philosophical, and we can no more refuse to satisfy the craving after a knowledge of the reason of things than we can decline to heed the pangs of hunger when we feel them. For it must be remembered that the reason of things includes the reason

of ourselves. We naturally want to know what is meant by ourselves, what we are here for, and what is our destiny. It is absurd to prejudge the case and to say that no answer to these questions can be found. As a matter of fact, looking back over the world's history, we see that when man has found an answer to the question as to the reason of himself, he has been able to live more truly than before. Life has become richer and nobler; and we count ourselves qualified in some measure to judge of its richness and nobleness. This is a fact that moral science has to take account of.

Again, as a matter of history, we know that philosophy, speculative unaided philosophy, failed to discover a reason for man himself which gave true satisfaction to the human mind and heart. And at last philosophy was glad to welcome the light which revelation was able to throw upon those very problems with which philosophy had concerned itself. Dogmatic theology claims to give an authoritative answer to the question which philosophy raises. It supplies a philosophy which appeals to the human reason as does speculative philosophy, which rests on no other authority than its own intrinsic reasonableness. And it is a presumption in favour of revelation being what it claims to be, if it furnishes such an answer to the questions philosophy has already asked as will commend itself to the human reason as likely to be correct.

A point which will here be contended for is, that the answer given by revelation or dogmatic theology

to the question proposed by moral philosophy as to the reason of man's moral nature is intrinsically reasonable; that it is indeed far more reasonable than any answer which speculative philosophy, ignoring the aid of revelation, is able to give. I know that to many the very epithet 'dogmatic' will sound terrible. Dogmatism is the very last thing that people care for to-day. They ask for argument and reason, not for dogma. I recognise the justice of their request, and I here state that I am not going to dogmatise but to reason.

The argument is this: Men ask for some reason of themselves; to what end they are what they are, and so forth. They want to know what to make of themselves. They seek a philosophy of life. Has any been given which can satisfy them? There is a philosophy of life contained in the New Testament which claims to be authoritative, claims that is to be divinely given. Let us ignore at first its claims of authority, and ask only what this philosophy is. Let us examine it as we should examine any other system of philosophy and study its reasonableness. In doing this we are not troubling ourselves as to whether man thought out this philosophy or whether he received it from heaven. The point is: What is it? Is it reasonable? There are no anathemas compelling us to believe it against our reason. The appeal is essentially to the reason.

And this record of revelation contained in the New Testament, with its philosophy of human life, also claims to give some knowledge of God. Now

respecting the Divine life man can of course know nothing *a priori*, but of human life he does know something, and, if we may so say, he has a right to an opinion about it. Dogmatic theology, as we have it in the Christian books of the New Testament, is partly concerned with man and partly with God. It is true that the derivation of the word 'theology' suggests that this is all about God and not at all about man; and it is possible that the popular objection to dogmatic theology arises from a notion that in it man is puzzling himself about questions which he is incapable of understanding, that he is pretending to comprehend what he cannot comprehend. However this may be, let it be explained that by dogmatic theology is not here meant merely what the New Testament professes to reveal about God, but also what it reveals about man; it includes, that is to say, a philosophy of human life. As then we know something of man apart from revelation, let us simply ask what the so-called revelation has to say of the meaning, the reason of this something we know. Does it throw any light upon it? It will be found that it sheds a most welcome light on what would otherwise be unexplained.

And further, the philosophy of human life as it is supplied by dogmatic theology is not only speculatively reasonable; it supplies also a working hypothesis of life. This hypothesis not only can work but it has worked; and the Christian Church, spite of all its imperfections (and they are many indeed), is the proof of this. History tells us what has been the effect upon

the world of the Christian philosophy of life. In spite of the fact that there have been among professing Christians many travesties of this philosophy, it yet remains true that what men count good in the world to-day is to be traced to the Christian view of human life. And if the holding of the Christian philosophy has for its result the making of man into just that which his philosophy sets before him as his reason or meaning in the scheme of the universe, we have a further proof of its reasonableness.

Is there then anything unreasonable in putting ourselves voluntarily to school under the authority that has given us this philosophy of life whose reasonableness we have once allowed? If Jesus Christ has so revealed God as that the Divine character is itself the explanation of man's moral nature according to the highest demands of reason, shall we say that it is unreasonable to take His word about God Himself, of Whom we should otherwise be ignorant? For we can know nothing of God apart from a revelation He may make of Himself.

It may seem that we are here adopting an entirely new apologetic, and that we are tacitly assenting to the principles of Rationalism. But a candid reflection on the line here taken will make it clear that while an appeal is here made to the reason, no claim is made that the reason of itself is able to get at the meaning of the universe and man's place therein. Rationalism repudiates authority altogether, but true reason can accept an authority which has once justified itself to reason.

But we have passed from speaking of the reason of things to the human reason, and it is desirable to have clearly in our minds what this transition involves ; and we must enquire whether there is a proper connection of thought between what we have called the reason of things and the human reason.

What do we mean by human reason ? First of all we may say that we do not mean something separable from the human personality. There is not an Ego and a reason ; but there is an Ego who reasons. Reasoning is a power, a function of the Ego, and the power to reason we call the reason. But there is no such thing as reason. It has not substance. It is only an abstraction. We know that we are and that we reason, and so we say that we have reason. Reason then is an element of our personality and inseparable from it save in thought.

When we speak of appealing to a man's reason, we really mean appealing to the man himself as one capable of reasoning. A man is not at one time a reasoning being, and at another a moral being, and at another something else. He is always himself, and when he reasons it is himself reasoning, himself, all the time that he is reasoning, a moral being. I do not think it necessary to stop now to speak at length of what is meant by saying that a man is a moral being. To that we shall come in the next chapter. What is now insisted on is that, whatever abstractions we may make of man's powers these are but abstractions and not realities save in relation to the Ego.

When then man reflects on the reason of things, it

is the man and not the reason of man that is reflecting. The very power he has to reflect on the reason of things, whether the scientific or philosophical reason of them, we call his reason, but it is not reason but a man reflecting, a man with all his powers.

It may be questioned how far it is justifiable to speak of the reason of animals lower in the scale of creation than man. Some would say that animals have intelligence but not reason. But it seems to me that some animals are endowed with reason in an elementary degree. They have a certain power to discern cause and effect, and this may be called reason.

But it is very much a matter of definition. I do not see why it should be considered necessary that reason should be conscious of itself to be entitled to be called reason. Reason does not of course come to maturity until the being in possession of it knows of his possession. Man has what the brutes have not, both speculative and moral reason; but men have these in very varying degrees, and the savage may have no consciousness of an endowment of moral reason and yet his action may be affected by it. We may say that man in general has a power to form ideals but the power is slight in the savage. The power to form ideals arises from the possession of moral reason.

What I am here calling moral reason will be seen to include what Kant calls "practical reason." Practical reason, according to Kant, is reason determining the will. But moral reason, while it does this, does some-

thing more. By it we are able to judge of the dignity or worth of being, and even to speculate on the divine character.

There is reason determining action but not the will, reason determining, that is to say, action as distinguished from conduct. We speak of the action of brutes but not of their conduct. The term conduct is applicable to man because he is endowed with moral reason.

The end of all action with the brutes is determined by instinct, but the means whereby the instinct is to be satisfied may be partly reasoned. With man the end of conduct is determined by moral reason, but there must be, I believe, also an accompanying instinct. Of this more in later chapters.

What I am anxious to make clear here is that man's estimate of the reason of things is necessarily conditioned by the fact that he is endowed with moral reason and not simply with speculative reason, which is that whereby he discerns cause and effect and traces the universal reign of law and order.

I shall speak in the next chapter of the relation of conscience to moral reason, but it will be seen at once that there is no necessary antagonism either between reason and faith, or between reason and authority. Indeed I should go so far as to say that the highest form of faith would be quite impossible to a being who had not moral reason, and some degree of faith would seem to be a necessary accompaniment of moral reason. Nor again can any reasonable being exercise faith to order, impelled that is by authority, until that autho-

rity has first justified itself to reason. And even when this justification has been made, it needs to be constantly renewed. If what purports to be a divine revelation contains what is contrary to reason, its authority is inevitably weakened in men's minds. Whatever we find in Revelation as new and undiscovered before by reason, we shall believe just so far as we believe the Revelation to be divinely given and so authoritative. If we find ourselves unable to believe the contents of the Revelation, our faith in it will be shaken.

Our belief then in the Revelation, our acceptance of it as authoritative, may be weakened or strengthened by examination of its contents. But it is most important to judge of it first of all by what it says of something about which we know, and not by what it has to say of something of which we know nothing.

But it will be said that it is a new line of defence which is being here adopted, and it will be asked whether the appeal to miracles is to be entirely superseded. What is the value of miracles to prove that a revelation is divine? This is really the question that has to be faced.

Paley's argument, of the insufficiency of which I am more and more convinced, is this: If a revelation is to be given it can only be by miracles. Let then the reality of the miracles be established and you have a proof that the revelation of which they were the seal is divine.

I am quite ready to acknowledge that Paley has

proved satisfactorily that according to the belief of the first propagators of the Christian religion miracles really had taken place. But Paley has not shown, nor could he have shown, that those who, as he says, "passed their lives in labours, dangers and sufferings, voluntarily undergone in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief of those accounts," believed the Revelation to be divine because of the miracles they had witnessed. Nor can you convince men to-day that the Christian Revelation was divinely given by arguing that miracles prove it so to be. And even if miracles help to convince those who witness them, the same cannot be said of their effect on those who hear of them eighteen hundred years afterwards and are themselves not eye-witnesses. If men are to be convinced by miracles at all, these must be miracles which they themselves witness. I am disposed to agree with Hume that "a miracle can never be proved so as to be the foundation of a system of religion."

But it may be said: Is not the miracle of the Resurrection the foundation of the Christian religion? Unless the Resurrection is a fact of history where is the value of the Christian faith?

To such questions as these, supposing them to be put, I should answer that to attempt to prove the miracle of the Resurrection apart from the moral appeal made by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ would be futile. A system of religion, while it must rest on fact and not on fiction to be of any value, must yet appeal to man's moral reason.

# The King's Library

## INTRODUCTORY

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It is just here as it seems to me that Paley's *Evidences* and *Moral Philosophy* fail. He regards the Creator as benevolent and as providing for the good of his creatures, but he looks upon Revelation as simply a making known of what God wills men to do in order that they may attain to happiness in the next life. But there seems to be in Paley's teaching an utter lack of the thought that Revelation is a Revelation of God and not simply a Revelation given by God of human duty. Characteristic of his utterances is the following passage from his *Moral Philosophy*<sup>1</sup>: "Had Jesus Christ delivered no other declaration than the following, 'The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation';—he had pronounced a message of inestimable importance, and well worthy of that splendid apparatus of prophecy and miracles with which his mission was introduced and attested; a message in which the wisest of mankind would rejoice to find an answer to their doubts, and rest to their enquiries. It is idle to say that a future state had been discovered already:—it had been discovered as the Copernican system was;—it was one guess among many. He alone discovers who *proves*; and no man can prove this point, but the teacher who testifies by miracles that his doctrine comes from God."

This passage is thoroughly characteristic of the

<sup>1</sup> Book V., Chapter ix.

writer. If we suppose that Jesus Christ had, according to the author's hypothesis, spoken no other words than those quoted above, they would have been meaningless according to Paley's philosophy. For he does not make it clear how men could interpret what would be meant by 'doing good' and 'doing evil' respectively, seeing that he dismisses the question of man's "moral sense" by saying: "This celebrated question therefore becomes in our system a question of pure curiosity; and as such, we dismiss it to the determination of those who are more inquisitive than we are concerned to be about the natural history and constitution of the human species."<sup>1</sup>

Thus 'doing good' and 'doing evil' would mean, according to Paley, acting according to the commandments of God and acting contrary to those commandments respectively, such commandments being given by the utterance of some prophet of God who must confirm his message by a miracle. God's will is made known to man only when it is sealed by miracle. In this case it seems strange that we are not permitted to be ourselves the witnesses of miracles, instead of depending on the testimony of witnesses who lived more than eighteen hundred years ago.

There must be something very unsatisfactory in a philosophy which can dismiss the question of the "moral sense" as Paley does and substitute for the Revelation which God has given of Himself, and which appeals to man's moral reason, as I hope presently

<sup>1</sup> *Moral Philosophy*, Book I., Chapter v.

to argue, a mere making known of what God requires of man under pain of eternal punishment. But it is only when we have understood Paley's so-called moral philosophy that we see the real defects of his *Evidences of Christianity*.

These Evidences are, it seems to me, right so far as they go. Paley proves conclusively—on the assumption that the New Testament Scriptures are authentic, a point which he himself investigates—that those who first propagated the Christian religion themselves believed that they had witnessed miracles; but that the miracles were an attestation of the divine origin of the revelation associated with them, this he does not prove; nor could he by his own methods give proof of this, seeing that lying signs and wonders are possibilities contemplated in the Gospel. How then is the true to be discriminated from the false unless an appeal be made to the moral reason?

If it were the case that anyone not already predisposed to accept the Christian faith should be convinced by Paley's reasoning, I do not think he would "obey the Gospel" with any sense of freedom. For it would seem that Paley's philosophy is quite deficient, and his view of the end of divine revelation far removed from that of Him who appealed to His disciples not as slaves but as friends.

But I do not wish it to be thought that this essay is intended as a treatise on Christian Evidences any more than it is a treatise on Ethics. My desire rather is to extricate Christian evidences from their association with what seems to me to be no true philosophy

at all, and most certainly is not the Christian philosophy of the New Testament. The book on the evidences of Christianity suitable to the temper of the present time and sufficient to meet the demands of modern thought has yet to be written. If ever it comes to be written it will have to appeal to that department of the human reason which is conveniently classed as moral.

It is quite remarkable how few writers there have been in recent times ready to treat of moral philosophy from the standpoint of dogmatic theology, that is to say, regarding the Christian revelation as authoritative. There are, however, not wanting signs of an improvement in this respect; and the attention which is now being paid to the study of social questions makes it imperative that the very foundations of morality should be properly investigated from a Christian standpoint. The old "Moral Governor of the Universe" theory which, however much it may represent the Creator and Governor of the world as working for the happiness of His creatures, yet forgets the essentially Christian doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood, is wholly insufficient. The so-called religious "sanctions" of morality, which mean the prospect of rewards and punishments, the one for obedience and the other for disobedience to divine commands, are a mere travesty of Christian doctrine. Where the Moral Governor of the Universe is substituted for the Divine Father whom Christ revealed, there can be no wonder that many are repelled by what claims to be Christian teaching from Christianity

itself. On the other hand, if the truth of the Divine Fatherhood be insisted on without due regard being paid to the complementary truth of the Divine Holiness, an easy-going system of life is the inevitable result. Unless these two truths are rightly balanced and blended together, Christian teaching becomes but a caricature of its true self. Let us at least be clear what Christ and His apostles really did teach, and what was the philosophy of human life implicit in their doctrine.

It is my purpose then in this essay to set forth as clearly as I can what I believe to be the Christian teaching about God, and of man's relation to the Supreme Being. I do not disguise at the outset that my object in doing this is essentially practical. I regard speculation on these subjects as useless unless it ultimately makes demands on life. It is a rationale of life, which will make life truer and better, that men are really asking for. And a mere speculative discussion, to whose conclusions we are more or less indifferent, is of no avail.

On the other hand, I recognise that we have to be careful not to assume as true what we only wish to be true. The *à priori* method must be carefully checked by a knowledge of the facts of life. At the same time it seems to me that through the moral reason we have *à priori* intuitions and that these are of real value, that they are not deceptive. I do not mean of course to suggest that *à priori* intuitions are possible to us through the moral reason ex-

cept as following upon knowledge and experience. We cannot form moral judgments without the experience of life. What these words imply will be better understood as the argument of the essay proceeds.

To this argument we had better proceed at once. First of all, in the two next chapters, we must investigate the elementary notions of ethics contained in the four words—Duty, Virtue, Right, and Good. It is essential to clearness of thought to have some definition of these four. In the fourth chapter I propose to examine the relation of conscience to reason. On this point there is, as it seems to me, a good deal of confusion. In the fifth chapter I shall discuss the place assigned to Happiness in Utilitarianism.

It is not until we reach the sixth chapter that the subject proper of the essay is reached. The first five chapters rather point to the need for the introduction of the notion of holiness into ethical or moral philosophy. I shall try in Chapter VI. to trace the growth of the ethical conception of holiness in the Old Testament, not without the help of others, and particularly of the late Robertson Smith, whose fearless sifting of the Old Testament is now bearing fruit on all sides. The persistence of the notion of holiness throughout the Old Testament and from the Old Testament into the New has to be explained; and I shall try to shew in the seventh chapter how the doctrine of Jesus Christ completely transformed the notion according to the tendency which had already been manifest in the development of Old Testament

doctrine. This will lead up to the central thought of the book, which will be found in the eighth chapter, for which I have borrowed a title from Bishop Westcott, but without any desire to make him in any way responsible for the views there expressed. The four remaining chapters of the book will show the consistency of this Gospel of Creation with the general drift of New Testament theology, and the reader must judge for himself whether or not he agrees with the writer that we have here a consistent whole which removes many difficulties, and is not alien to the demands of modern thought.



## CHAPTER II.

### MORAL DUTY.



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### MORAL DUTY.

IT has been said that the science of ethics differs from all other sciences in that it deals, not with what *is*, but with what *ought to be*. But this does not seem to me to be a proper account to give of ethics. For every science must deal with what *is*, or (not to lay too much stress on the word ‘*is*’) with phenomena. To this rule ethics can be no exception, whether you call it a study or a science. It too must treat of phenomena and seek to give some explanation of them; otherwise it becomes mere speculation. Not that speculation is valueless; quite the contrary. For science must have her speculative hypotheses which she seeks to verify by an inductive method. But these are hypotheses to account for and to connect together phenomena.

It seems to me that the correct account to give of ethics is that it has to do not with what ought to be, but with *the human cognition of an ought*. This latter is a fact of experience, a phenomenon, as we say. It can then be made the subject of a science.

It would be fair enough to say of ethics that it has to deal with an 'ought to be,' provided that this 'ought to be' were looked upon as real in the same way that mass and motion are regarded as real in dynamics. We could not make mass and motion the subject of a science unless we had some cognition of them. Nor is it of the least use to speculate what ought to be, apart from the present reality of an 'ought.' As what 'ought to be' is often opposed in thought to what actually is, we come to think of the 'ought to be' as non-existent. But you cannot have a science of the non-existent. A subject of study must at least have an existence in the human mind; and so the 'ought to be' of ethics must appear to the mind as clearly as do mass and motion, or you cannot study it or make of it a systematic science.

We must at once proceed to investigate the ethical use of the word 'ought,' and it will conduce to clearness if we consider, first of all, what we mean when we say that men ought to do anything. In other words, we will postpone the discussion of what 'ought to be' until we have considered the 'ought to do.' Strictly speaking, it is with what men ought to do that ethics is concerned. Whether any meaning can be attached to the 'ought to be,' apart from this that men ought to bring it about, will be considered after an explanation has been given of what it is convenient to call the 'moral ought.'

Now in propositions which have a human subject

and, for a predicate, a simple present ought with its completed infinitive, we soon detect that there are two distinct 'oughts.' Thus the 'ought' in 'You ought to speak the truth' is not the same as the 'ought' in 'You ought to be rewarded.' For while the 'ought' of the first of these is really an 'ought' of the subject addressed, the 'ought' of the second, if it is properly an 'ought' at all, implies the 'ought' of some one else who ought to reward the person addressed. It might be that 'You ought to be rewarded' meant no more than 'You deserve to be rewarded.' If so, then clearly the ought of 'You ought to speak the truth' and that of 'You ought to be rewarded' are entirely different things. For to substitute 'deserve' for 'ought' in 'You ought to speak the truth' is to alter the meaning of what any one could possibly mean by using these words.

The 'oughts' then which occur in propositions such as have been described above may be conveniently divided into (1) *oughts of activity*, (2) *oughts of passivity*. Thus in 'You ought to speak the truth' the 'ought' is one of the subject's potential activity. In 'You ought to be rewarded' the 'ought' is one of the subject's potential passivity. This second proposition may, as has been said, imply the 'ought' of some other person's activity; but as this is not expressed, the 'ought' must be considered to be one of passivity.

When we speak of the subject's activity, such activity must be understood to involve the activity of the will of the subject. That is to say, the

activity is or results from volition. If any one dispute the fact of human will and say that volition is purely illusory, then to that person the distinction here made between the 'oughts of activity' and the 'oughts of passivity' is illusory too. It becomes waste of time to argue further.

These propositions which have a human subject and, for a predicate, a simple present 'ought' with its completed infinitive are possible *ethical propositions* when the 'ought' is one of the subject's activity in the sense explained above. 'You ought to help your friends,' 'Men ought to abstain from theft' are examples of what may be ethical propositions. But not all such propositions commonly used are ethical propositions, as will presently be seen.

But it must be carefully noted that the 'ought' of these propositions must not be qualified in any way. Thus 'Men ought not to steal' is not an ethical proposition if *not* qualifies *ought*. If this means Men ought to not-steal, or to refrain from stealing, the proposition may be an ethical one, not otherwise. That is to say, in ethical propositions the predicate must be an 'ought' and not the negation of an 'ought.'

Consider the proposition : We ought to obey God rather than men. This, if it is to be an ethical proposition, must be understood to mean : We ought to prefer obedience to God to obedience to man. But it is not to be accounted a possible ethical proposition if it be understood to be : We ought to obey God more than we ought to obey man. For the words

'more than we ought to obey man' serve here to qualify the 'ought' of 'We ought to obey God.'

The proposition 'You ought to have gone out yesterday' is not a possible ethical proposition as it stands. For it cannot be a present 'ought' to go out yesterday. This proposition might be used to express the fact that yesterday the ethical proposition was true, 'You ought to go out.' But as the proposition 'You ought to have gone out yesterday' stands, the 'ought' can only be one of passivity.

'You ought to sleep' may be an ethical proposition, or on the other hand the 'ought' may be one of passivity. There would be no difficulty in deciding the point if the meaning of the words were known. The 'ought' in 'You ought to be asleep' can only be one of passivity. For so far as the sleeping depends on the volition of the subject, the 'ought' is a past and not a present 'ought,' whereas the 'ought' of an ethical proposition is, according to the definition, present and not past.

We may now pass on to a further analysis of the 'oughts' of human activity. These may be classed under two heads, viz. (1) the *moral oughts*, and (2) the *hypothetical* or *prudential oughts*. The distinction between these which must now be set forth is of the greatest importance.

To explain what is meant by a 'moral ought' it is necessary to have some clear notion what we mean when we speak of a man as a *moral being*. We cannot define the word 'moral' straight away. For it is im-

possible to define any adjective simply, except in terms of a noun from which it may be derived. And when the definition of the adjective is given in terms of the noun, it is of no value unless we have further a definition of the noun itself which is employed in the definition of the adjective. Thus if we define 'virtuous' as 'shewing virtue,' we have given no real definition of the adjective unless we give also a definition of 'virtue.' Those who have ever attempted to formulate a definition of the adjective 'good' know how difficult it is.

Now it would seem that every finite being must have instincts. Man has instincts in common with the beasts. The beasts, so far as we can see, are entirely guided by their instincts, though it is not to be denied that they have also intelligence or incipient reason, by which they know how their instincts can be satisfied. They do not, so far as we know, set before themselves any end, except so far as that end is suggested by instinct. The means to an end instinctively desired may become known to them by reason.

It is not to be assumed that the instincts of the brute creation are all selfish. Quite the contrary. There are what are called altruistic instincts which direct the creature to a course of action seemingly detrimental to itself, instincts which even lead animals to sacrifice their lives in the interests of another, and even, as in the case of a moth at a candle, to sacrifice their lives, as it seems to us, to no purpose.

The animal creation then lower in the scale than

man is a marvellous machinery controlled by what we call instincts, the means to the gratification of such instincts being determined to some extent by reason.

But when we come to man the case is different. He has ends set before him by his reason, to the attainment of which his instincts may fail to carry him. From this fact, namely, man's possession of what I am calling *moral reason*, which is at war with his instincts, results man's unhappiness, which can only come to an end when his moral reason and highest instinct are ultimately at one. How this will come about we shall try to discover in the course of this essay.

By speaking of man as a moral being we mean that he has, besides instincts, moral reason, which, becoming imperative in what we call his Conscience, tells him that he ought to control his instincts, to prefer this to that, and, it may be, to suppress certain instincts altogether.

Man then, as a moral being, has a consciousness of having to choose between certain courses of action, while he has all the while a cognition of a dictate to choose in a particular way. It is as if he were free to choose, and yet he is enslaved by his instincts, which assert themselves in defiance of his reason. I do not now stop to discuss the question of Free Will, to which we shall come, however, in a later chapter.

It will be understood then that temptation is a *sine qua non* of a moral being. In the words of St. James: "Each man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust."

Conscience then dictates to us what we ought to do according to the particular circumstances in which we find ourselves, and the 'ought' is absolute, and in no way conditional. This is that which we mean by the 'moral ought.' It is Kant's categorical imperative. It does not tell us what we ought to do in order to avoid punishment. If it whispers any threat of punishment, it tells us that we *deserve* to suffer if we disobey. For the conscience not only commands but commends. It tells us that that which is commanded is right and the opposite wrong. Conscience is the voice of God within the soul of man. It is God who teaches us the meaning of right and wrong. This is the great truth which leads us into life.

It will be understood that no human being can dictate to me my 'moral oughts.' Say I am taught as a child not to lie. Unless, when desiring to lie, I have within myself a cognition of a dictate of conscience not to lie, or, at any rate, of a dictate to obey whoever so teaches me, then there is no 'moral ought' not to lie. It is not dictation from without that makes the 'moral ought' but the voice of conscience within. Whether the cognition of the 'moral ought,' which is internal, has to be called forth by words from without spoken into the ear or by actions witnessed by the eye, is not now being discussed.

It is possible to deny the existence of the Conscience, and to say that the cognition of an 'ought' is purely illusory. But I doubt whether any man living could deny that he ought to shew gratitude for favours disinterestedly bestowed upon him. If he allowed this

one 'ought' he would be accepting the principle of the 'moral ought,' however much he might wish to restrict its application. I do not in this chapter enter into the content of the 'moral ought,' or what will be better called by the name 'moral duty'; but I shall assume that gratitude is at least included in it.

My moral duty is then that which I ought to do, whatever desire I may feel to the contrary.

And it is important to make a perfectly clear distinction between the fact of moral duty and the motive for its fulfilment. The answer to the question, Why *ought* I to speak the truth? or Why is it my moral duty to speak the truth? is not necessarily the same as the answer to the question Why should I speak the truth? This last question, where the word 'should' is not intended as equivalent to 'ought,' may only mean that the questioner desires some motive of advantage to himself or some one else sufficient to induce him to speak the truth. It is the first function of ethics to discover the ground of human duty and to supply a test by which it may be known what that duty is. The question whether or not it is, as men say, worth while to fulfil their duty is a separate one. In discriminating the two, however, I do not mean to imply that the one question should be considered to the neglect of the other. Unless the theory of ethics can contribute something towards the practice of life, it will neither win nor deserve to win much attention. But my own experience is that the study of ethics may not only conduce to clearness of thought but also prove a valuable moral discipline. Indeed it leads

us right into the presence of God Himself, as will presently appear.

My moral duty then is that which my conscience tells me I ought to do, and it varies from moment to moment. As circumstances change, my moral duty changes too, in its details, that is. When I say that I ought to do something, I mean by "I" what I am at that moment when I accept the truth of the proposition—I, that is, in those particular circumstances in which I am then placed. But it must not be thought that my moral duty is for that reason conditional. My moral duty to me at every moment is a categorical imperative, absolute and unconditional. I, being in such and such circumstances, ought to act in such a manner.

But it may be said: But if you were in other circumstances it would not be your moral duty to do what in these present circumstances you ought to do. To this I should reply that I am not in other circumstances. I am in my present circumstances and these determine my moral duty. It is true that I am always myself, but I cannot say that I ought to do anything apart from the circumstances in which I am placed.

It is true that we make use of general ethical or moral propositions such as 'Men ought not to steal,' 'Men ought to speak the truth.' By these propositions we do not mean that it is always man's moral duty not to steal, and to speak the truth, but that these propositions hold good whenever they are relevant. That is to say, if man is tempted to steal, finds within

himself any desire to take what does not belong to him, he ought to check such desire and refrain from the theft. If tempted to lie, he should speak the truth. General moral duties, while always binding, are not always relevant.

Our power to form general moral judgments, and to judge of cases in which we are not ourselves the actors would be nothing at all, unless we had a conscience by which we could judge of our own duty in the like circumstances. All men are not equally instructed in moral duty; the conscience of all is not equally enlightened, nor their moral reason at the same stage of development; consequently some men might not recognise as moral duties what others recognise and fulfil.

When I say to another: You ought to do so-and-so, I either expect that my words will call forth in him a response, or that, failing that, there is some way by which I can persuade him of the truth of the moral proposition of which he is the subject. But if ever I am to convince him of the truth of it, it can only be by an appeal to his moral reason, which his conscience will make personal to him.

It would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to define what I have been calling *moral reason*, as indeed it is difficult to define reason without the epithet 'moral' prefixed to it. But we may come at an understanding of what is meant by moral reason by reflection on our own conduct and actions, and perhaps most of all by reflecting on

our conceptions of the Supreme Being. It may be that reason other than moral gives man his first conception of God. For reason demands a first cause of what we see, and know, and have experience of, and this first cause we call God. But we are not content simply to regard the Deity as the first cause. Quiet reflection brings to us the assurance that this Being who is the cause of all created things has also a character. That this is so is shown by the fact that people refuse to believe of God that which is revolting to their moral reason. I am not unmindful of the fact that men have had most unworthy thoughts of God, and still have. But this is where the moral reason is but slightly developed. Where the moral reason is fully active, men cannot allow that God can be anything but good and kind and merciful in all His dealings. If we could conceive of two beings perfectly happy, we should judge that one of the two the higher and the better who shared his happiness with others. Certainly we should account a being who was indifferent to suffering as unworthy of our highest reverence.

We may say then that moral reason is that department of human reason whereby we judge of the worth and dignity of being, and the possession of which enables us to say that God must be this or this. We cannot of course say of God that He *ought* to be or do anything, for we cannot conceive of Him as acting otherwise than perfectly. If we can say of anything that it *ought to be*, meaning by this something which it is not a moral duty of humanity to

bring about, then we judge that God must bring it to pass.

But it seems inappropriate to speak of what 'ought to be' unless we mean by this what man ought to bring about. But while exception may be taken to this expression 'what ought to be,' if applied to that which is not seen to be a moral duty of man, we must nevertheless take into our consideration the thing intended by it, and recognise that moral philosophy cannot treat of its subject satisfactorily without taking into account those aspirations of the human soul to believe that there are certain things which the moral reason demands but which in the experience of man have not yet become actual.

Thus far we have spoken of the 'moral ought,' the 'ought' which occurs in ethical or moral propositions which are an expression of moral duty. But it must be acknowledged that men do make use of the word 'ought' in a hypothetical sense. Thus we might say: You ought to go out, if you want to preserve your health. Here the 'ought' is conditioned by the words 'if you want to preserve your health.' Such 'oughts' then are conveniently called hypothetical or prudential.

The Hedonistic system of ethics so far as it is based on an 'ought' at all is based on a hypothetical ought. But the system is fallacious. It says to man: "You desire happiness all of you. Well then, find out what will produce your happiness. This is what you ought

to do." Of course this is quite illogical. You cannot argue

You desire happiness.

You cannot be happy unless you do *x*.

Therefore you ought to do *x*.

The final ought is conditioned by 'if you desire happiness.' It therefore has no moral use at all. The 'moral ought' must be absolute. If it were true that I ought to seek my own happiness (the 'ought' being moral) then I ought to do *x*.

"But," says the Hedonist, "ought you not to seek your happiness?" I say "No!" But he replies: "But you do seek your own happiness; you cannot deny it." I reply that I have an instinct to produce my own happiness, or I have an instinct to certain things which I think will produce my happiness, but I have no cognition of a moral duty to seek it. The two things are quite distinct. My conscience dictating to me my moral duty tells me in what order to prefer my instincts, which to satisfy and which to leave unsatisfied. It certainly does not single out my instinct to produce my own happiness and say that is always to stand first. Quite the contrary. It puts it low down in the scale of instinct, calls it indeed selfish.

It cannot be denied that there is always in our use of the word 'ought' a suggestion of opposition, actual or possible. Thus 'You ought to speak the truth' suggests that there is or may be an instinct prompting us to lie. But because such a proposition as 'You ought to speak the truth' might have appended to it

the words 'If tempted to lie,' this addition does not make the 'ought' hypothetical; it merely defines the circumstances in which the proposition would be relevant.

There is a view taken by some writers, notably by Paley, that in saying that a man ought to do anything we really mean that he will be punished if he does not. When conscience then makes its voice heard, it is a voice of warning, of threatening. This is a view which will not be adopted here, for it is not according to moral reason. The threatenings of conscience would be worthless unless our moral reason gave us the power to see that we deserve punishment for transgressing the dictate.

In the ideal state of human existence every 'ought' will have become a 'must.' Christ's every 'ought' was a 'must.' With Him there was no 'ought.'

Before passing on, it will be well to recapitulate the contents of the present chapter. Ethics is the science of moral duty. Moral duty is the duty of man, that which he ought to do. It is absolute, unconditional, independent of desires or instincts. If any deny the categorical imperative, there is no science of ethics for such. Hedonism is the inevitable and logical creed.

But while moral duty is unconditional and imperative in its demands, there is nothing unreasonable in it. So far from being not according to reason, it is the outcome of moral reason, which, if undefinable, is yet intelligible to one in the possession of it. I have

not in this chapter attempted to investigate the content of man's moral duty. Though use has been made here of ethical or moral propositions, such as 'Men ought not to steal,' 'Men ought to speak the truth,' this has not been done with any assumption of their truth, but only for illustration. It would have done just as well, but would hardly be suitable to the general reader, if I had said, 'Men ought to  $x$ ,' thus leaving the completion of the predicate uncertain. The concrete appeals to some people better than does the abstract. I have therefore made use of concrete examples, and it is open to any to deny if they will that these are true ethical propositions. If they are ethical propositions, that is to say if they contain a 'moral ought,' or, in other words, are an expression of moral duty, the 'ought' is an absolute one.

## CHAPTER III.

VIRTUE, RIGHT AND GOOD.



## CHAPTER III.

### VIRTUE, RIGHT AND GOOD.

IN the preceding chapter something was said about man's instincts. These he has in common with the beasts, though of course his instincts go far beyond theirs. Still instincts they are, even though man has the power to ascend in character to the dignity of God Himself. It seems necessary to say something more about instincts in order to elucidate the notion of virtue.

Some of the instincts that man has in common with the brutes are the instinct of self-preservation, the instinct to feed, the instinct to sleep, the sexual instinct, and there are sundry altruistic instincts, such as love of children, and other social instincts, including the instinct of sympathy. Of course it is not only man that is a social being; the social instincts are well developed in the lower animals.

But there are many instincts that men have which are not shared by the beasts, and there are two which seem to belong to all men as men, namely, the instinct of reverence or worship or holiness (but care must be taken not to attach an ethical meaning

to this word at this stage) and the instinct of self-respect. The instinct of awe or reverence or worship, or by whatever name we call it, would seem to follow upon the development of reason. Reason demanded a cause of the various phenomena of which men had experience; and to men in that stage there were very many causes or spirits or gods. Unseen beings, or beings resident in what was seen, presented themselves to the human imagination at this stage. Mysterious beings, some beneficent and some malevolent, were invented by reason to account for what was otherwise unaccountable. And with this invention of the reason came possibly the instinct of awe, reverence, worship, holiness. But while we may suppose that one was an accompaniment of the other, we must not confuse reason and instinct. The one is thought, the other is feeling. There must be an accompanying feeling, or reason could not determine action. This point has, I think, been very clearly set forth by Mr Leslie Stephen in his *Science of Ethics*, to which reference may be made.

Then we have in man the instinct of self-respect, the instinct to care what others think of him. It is the possession of this instinct which gives meaning to virtue. To practise virtue is to give evidence of self-respect. Self-respect is indeed virtue, and the virtues are the evidence of it. Moral duty passes into conduct through the operation of the instinct of self-respect or virtue. And it is the conscience, which, as we keep saying, is the moral reason becoming imperative, that prescribes the moral duty.

The instinct of self-respect then is associated with the moral reason, which gives man a knowledge of the worth or dignity of being, and so of himself. The virtues are those qualities, or, shall we say? those items of conduct which men recognise as proceeding from self-respect, the respect of man for himself as man. A virtue, such as fortitude, may be to some extent selfish, that is to say it may proceed from a desire to be thought well of by others, yet still there is the thought of our own worth involved in it.

The instinct of self-respect must be most carefully distinguished from the altruistic instincts, the former being moral, the latter not. For the instinct of self-respect operates to carry out the dictates of the conscience which define our moral duty. It is not self-respect that makes a hen brood over her eggs. Nor is it self-respect that makes a mother care for her young. Yet in a degree both these sights may arouse in us respect, and through the moral reason make their demand upon us; so that, if a mother had lost the instinct to care for her children, she might yet know that she ought to care for them.

It may be permissible perhaps to hazard a guess that the altruistic instincts served the end in the evolution of creation, according to the purpose of God, of forming material for the exercise of the moral reason, which had before been latent. Though altruism is non-moral, the sight of it is yet beautiful. The moral reason sees in it the possibility of something more than instinctive altruism; the conscience makes an imperative demand, and self-respect operates

to induce men to do acts of kindness. Kindness is a virtue if it proceeds from self-respect.

But again the instinct of sympathy must be distinguished from that of self-respect. Sympathy cannot be accounted a virtue. Sympathy is found in the lower animals, but we do not think of them as virtuous. Indeed virtue is that which distinguishes man as man, and depends on the fact that man is a moral being. If a man relieves pain because it is more painful to him to witness it than to remove it, he is not acting virtuously. But if a man relieves pain, when he might get away from the sight of it by going away altogether to another place, because he knows that he ought to relieve it, and because his instinct of self-respect operates to make him fulfil this duty, then he acts virtuously.

To act virtuously then, as I understand it, is to act from a motive of self-respect, though it must be allowed that there are degrees of self-respect.

Next I think a distinction should be made between virtuous instinct and the instinct of virtue or self-respect. And this is the distinction I should make. A virtuous instinct is an instinct which has been acquired through the habits of former generations in the practice of virtue. It is thus an altruistic instinct which has been, if we may so say, morally acquired, and while it is not in any way antagonistic to self-respect, yet is it not dependent on it. A man may acquire virtuous instincts for himself by the steady practice of virtue, so that it becomes comparatively easy for him to do what once he did with difficulty.

It is a mistake, I think, to suppose that the virtues and the practice of virtue are not dictated to us by the conscience, and to regard them as something supererogatory. In his *Lectures and Essays on Natural Theology and Ethics*, posthumously published, the late Professor W. Wallace says:<sup>1</sup> "One of the greatest defects noticeable in certain philosophers' books on Morals is that they confound the duties (*devoirs*) with the virtues, or that they give names of virtues to simple duties: so that though, properly speaking, there is only one virtue, the love of order, they produce an infinity of them. This puts confusion everywhere and so embarrasses the science of ethics that it is hard enough to see clearly what one ought to do to be a good man (*homme be bien*)."

But surely it is all a matter of definition, and it is exactly here that confusion has arisen in the science of ethics. Writers do not clearly define their terms and oftentimes the reader is carried from one meaning to another of words until he hardly knows whether or not he agrees with his author. Imagine the confusion that would result in mathematics and the physical sciences if words were allowed to pass from one meaning to another! Yet such is the state of ethical science; though some writers, notably Professor Sidgwick, have done excellent work in clearing it of equivocation.

The question is: What do we mean by 'duty' and what do we mean by 'virtue'? When Wallace says a few lines further on "Some of them imagine they

<sup>1</sup> P. 325.

follow virtue, though they only follow the natural inclination they have to perform certain duties," it is clear that he is using the word 'duties' in a sense different from that for instance in which I have ventured to define 'moral duty' (which is capable of subdivision into moral duties).

It seems likely that by 'duties' in this passage Wallace meant what I have called 'virtuous instincts,' for he speaks of there being a natural inclination to perform them.

Some writers mean by 'duty' and 'duties' what your fellowmen expect of you. Of course you cannot include all the virtues under the category of duty if you thus define duty. It seems to me to be a fatal mistake in ethics to restrict the term 'duty' to the claims of society upon us. If 'duty' be what our fellowmen expect of us, and if ethics be the science of duty, then to pursue it we must investigate what our fellowmen do expect of us. Clearly this would vary according to the community in which we happened to live.

I have not chosen this passage from Wallace through love of criticising. My one desire just now is to make clear the meaning of the terms I use. I cannot see that the virtues are other than moral duties, though what I do fully recognise is that Virtue, as a quality, might remain, when moral duty has ceased through the instinct of virtue becoming supreme.

When a man acts from a motive of fear he does not act virtuously, unless indeed the fear be based on self-respect. The fear of losing the good opinion of

your fellowmen I should call a fear proceeding from self-respect. The fear of being put into prison, I should say, did not proceed from self-respect, but from dislike of discomfort.

The notion of virtue serves, as it seems to me, to make objective what if looked at from the point of view of moral duty might appear but subjective. For moral duty is that which is dictated in the individual conscience, and no science of any value could be made of this unless individual consciences had some agreement one with another.

And there has been, I think, this advantage in considering virtue, as we have done, as distinct in idea from moral duty, that it has given the opportunity to draw attention to the use of both moral reason and instinct in the determining of conduct.

Lest it should seem to some that I am treating too much of instinct and saying too little about will, it is well to remind ourselves that, according to Christian teaching, it is God who makes us both 'to will' and 'to do.' God enables us to act by the instincts He has given us. Unless there were appropriate instincts the will would not pass into conduct. It must not, however, be assumed that man's instincts are all a manifestation of divine character even though they be a divine gift. And if it seems to be inappropriate to speak of evil instincts as a divine gift, we must at least recognise that they proceed according to a divine law whereby evil begets evil for the setting forth of its own hideousness.

We pass next to the notion of Right. I am not proposing to speak of what are called 'rights' regarded as correlatives of duties, duties being regarded as what we owe to others, who in consequence of our debt have 'rights.' I am treating of what we call right in regard to conduct. It will, I think, conduce to clearness if we define as *right* in human conduct that which is not contrary to the dictates of conscience. It will be seen from this definition that the notion of 'right' is different from that of duty. For it is right to satisfy instincts which are not opposed by moral duty, and of which we should not say that it was our moral duty to satisfy them if they were unopposed by other and stronger instincts. Thus it is not often my moral duty to eat my dinner, but it is right so to do.

The distinction between right and wrong has no meaning as applied to the action of the brutes, who have no conscience or moral reason. But the distinction is of the greatest importance for moral beings.

But the definition of what is right, given above, is really insufficient; for it seems to make what is right a matter for the individual conscience. The relation of individual consciences one to another is a question we have not yet investigated, nor will the limits of this chapter permit of its investigation. All that we can now say is that what is not forbidden by any individual's conscience *seems* to that individual right. In other words, it is *subjectively* right. It is a fact that will have to be taken account of in the next

chapter that the dictates of conscience are not always the same, that morality is, as we say, progressive. It is also a fact that disobedience to the dictates of conscience tends to deaden the conscience, so that it becomes not a perfect instrument for determining what is right.

That the notion of right differs from that of duty is further clear from the fact that we think and speak of God acting rightly, though we could not conceive of Him acting according to duty. This would be impious, and contrary to the idea we have of an absolutely perfect Being, conditioned by nothing but His own perfection.

We finite beings have not the faculty to judge of right action save so far as that is determined for us by our cognition of moral duty. We do not know why particular instincts are right in the same way that we know why moral duty is right. This we discern in our moral reason. God alone can know the appropriateness of each instinct implanted by Him in His creatures; and while we can guess at and probably form a true opinion as to the "reason" of many instincts, we are not yet able to perceive the perfect wisdom and love which has formed them all.

For my own part I cannot conceive that there can be any instinct implanted by God in any creature that He has made which has not its root in the divine love and wisdom.

By assuming that God acts rightly, we assume that if we could perfectly know the whole plan and purpose of creation, we should find in it nothing contrary

to our moral reason. I do not mean by this that we should need a different moral reason. It is my profound conviction that the moral reason we have is true, and that, if we were to suppose, as some have tried to do, that God's ways are not to be judged by ordinary canons of moral reason, we should be lodged in the most hopeless contradictions, and well-nigh reduced to despair. I am further convinced that unless the more we come to know of God the more we shall find we can love Him as well as reverence Him, then religion is a hopeless concern, and there is no gospel for the world.

When we speak of a good God we must mean to include in the divine attributes those qualities which we count good in man. There cannot be one standard of goodness in the moral reason of man and another standard of goodness for God Himself. We cannot call that good in God which we call evil in man.

But we must be careful to guard against judging what we have not the ability to judge. We should say that it was in general wrong to take the life of a fellowman. But we cannot say that it is revolting to our moral reason that God should take away life as He has Himself given it. We can only believe that when we know all, we shall find that even in death God's love and wisdom extend to man.

We now pass to speak of the Good. This word is used both adjectively and as a substantive. We find it applied as an epithet to persons and things. We speak of a good horse, a good poem, a good joke,

and we speak also of a good man. But we should not apply the epithet 'good' to man except in reference to his moral qualities, whereas these have nothing to do with the application of 'good' to a horse, or a poem, or a joke. We want then if possible to come at some common conception which shall explain the very wide application of the term, and shall connect naturally the epithet 'good' with the substantive Good.

"Every art and every scientific enquiry ( $\muέθoδoς$ )," says Aristotle in the introduction to his *Ethics*, "and similarly every action and purpose may be said to aim at some good. Hence the good has been well defined as that at which all things aim ( $oδ\pi aντ' \epsilonφίεται$ )."<sup>1</sup>

It seems to me that we have here in a nutshell a definition which is sufficient to cover the use of the epithet 'good' in its various applications, as well as of the substantive 'Good.'

It will be observed that the underlying notion in this definition is essentially teleological, and things will be 'good' which attain their end. Thus we form ideals of what things should be, and we judge of these things as good in proportion as they approach the ideal we have formed of them. Some writers seem to assume that things are good if and because they give us pleasure. But this appears to me an insufficient account to give of the epithet 'good,' as Professor Sidgwick has clearly shown in his *Methods of Ethics*.<sup>2</sup> It is true that we do call things good which are pleasant to us; but this is not necessarily because

<sup>1</sup> *Nic. Ethics*, I. i., Welldon's translation.

<sup>2</sup> Book I., Chapter ix.

they are pleasant, but because our ideal of those things is that they should be pleasant. If we speak of 'good wine,' meaning that it is wine which is pleasant to the taste, the epithet 'good' is only properly applicable, if it be a property of ideal wine that it should be pleasant to the taste. If our ideal of wine is that it should be wholesome as well as pleasant to the taste, then we shall withhold the epithet 'good' from any wine that has injurious effects, however pleasant it may be at the time we drink it.

I am aware that we teach children to speak of things as 'good' which are pleasant to the taste; but this is capable of explanation in accordance with what has been said above. In speaking to them of anything as 'good' which is pleasant to the taste, we are not really limiting the application of the epithet to that which gives pleasure, but only acquiescing in what is perfectly obvious, that it is a property of our ideal of food that it should be pleasant to the taste. But we should be ready enough to instil into young minds that this was not the only property of the ideal, even of food. Indeed we speak commonly of things being good to eat when we mean no more than that they are suitable for food. If a traveller enquires whether water that he finds springing up by the roadside is 'good,' he does not seek to know what the taste of it may be, but whether it is fit to drink. Water that is good for one purpose is not fit for another. Our ideal of water for drinking is not the same as that of water that may be used for washing.

It is worth while to observe that 'ideal' is sometimes applied as an epithet to things when 'good' might be equally well used. Strictly speaking, nothing that exists is ideal, for the Ideal can exist only in imagination. When anything actually existing is called ideal, it is meant that it is perfectly good of its kind.

The epithet 'good' then is applicable to that which, if it does not come up to, at least approaches our ideal of it. And when 'good' is used of man (and chiefly in regard to his ethical qualities this is the case) we must, consistently with what has been said, understand the epithet to mean that the person to whom it is applied approximates to our ideal of what a man should be. That the term is chiefly applicable to man for his ethical qualities is in itself a witness that the common sense or reason of mankind regards those qualities as the distinguishing characteristic of man, and that without them there is no ideal man. We might call a man a good runner or a good athlete, because he had in a pre-eminent degree the qualities and powers necessary to a runner or an athlete; but we should not call such an one a good *man* because he had these qualities. The qualities of a 'good man' distinguish him as a *man*, as an ethical or moral being.

But it may be well to enquire what would be the bearing of this definition of 'good' on the application of the epithet to God. It may seem at first that the definition breaks down at this point.

It must be remembered that we do not speak of

a good God as distinguished from a God who is not good. Such a way of speaking might be possible where a belief in polytheism was prevalent. But when once we have grasped the thought of one Supreme Being, the notion of Goodness as applied to Him is that of Absolute Perfection. But this notion we could never have had but for the fact that we are moral beings, endowed with moral reason. It is this which enables us to form any conception of God worthy of Him, and to judge whether or not a Revelation purporting to come from Him really does so. Our moral reason gives us then in some degree our idea of God, or supports us in it when it is given.

Man can become good because he is a moral being. But we cannot speak of God as a moral being, in the sense in which this was defined in the last chapter. 'God cannot be tempted of evil.' He *is* and does not *become* Good. It is because we conceive of God as the very Ideal of Being that we call Him Good—Good absolutely and perfectly.

God then must be conceived of as Good acting always rightly, so that of no act of His can it be said that it is a denial of His Goodness.

Having now considered the notion implied in the use of the epithet good as applied to things, persons and to God Himself, we go on to speak of *the Good*. The ancients introduced their science of ethics with an enquiry into the end of human conduct, and this it was that they meant by 'the Good.' Aristotle opens

his treatise on ethics with the following words, some of which have been already quoted above :

“ Every art and every scientific enquiry, and similarly every action and purpose may be said to aim at some good. Hence the good has been well defined as that at which all things aim. But it is clear that there is a difference in the ends; for the ends are sometimes activities (*ἐνέργειαι*), and sometimes results (*ἔργα*) beyond the mere activities. Also where there are certain ends (*τέλη*) beyond the actions, the results are naturally superior to the activities.”<sup>1</sup>

Again : “ If it is true that in the sphere of action there is an end which we wish for its own sake, and for the sake of which we wish everything else, and that we do not desire all things for the sake of something else (for so the process will go on *ad infinitum* and our desire will be idle and futile), it is clear that this will be the good or the supreme good (*τἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ ἄριστον*). Does it not follow then that the knowledge of this supreme good is of great importance for the conduct of life (*πρὸς τὸν βίον*) and that [if we know it] we shall be like archers who have a mark (*σκοπόν*) at which to aim, we shall have a better chance of attaining what we want (*τοῦ δεόντος*) ? ”

Man then idealises human life ; he knows that it must have an end (*τέλος*) which must yield him perfect satisfaction. Happiness is therefore an element or factor in the *summum bonum*. But the question is : Wherein does his happiness consist ? We want

<sup>1</sup> Welldon’s translation.

to define the nature of happiness for man. And for this we need to ascertain the function of man (*τὸ ἔργον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*). “For as with a flute player, a statuary, or any artisan, or in fact any body who has a definite function and action, his goodness or excellence seems to lie in his function, so it would seem to be with Man, if indeed he has a definite function. Can it be said then that, while a carpenter and a cobbler have definite functions and actions, Man unlike them is naturally functionless (*ἀργόν*)? The reasonable view is that as the eye, the hand, the foot, and similarly each several part of the body has a definite function, so Man may be regarded as having a definite function apart from all these. What then can this function be? It is not life (*τὸ ζῆν*); for life is apparently something which man shares with the plants; and it is something peculiar to him (*τὸ ζόιον*) that we are looking for. We must exclude therefore the life of nutrition and increase. There is next what may be called the life of sensation (*αἰσθητική*). But this, too, is apparently shared by Man with horses, cattle, and all other animals. There remains what I may call the practical life of the rational part of Man’s being (*πρακτική τις τοῦ λόγου ἔχοντος*).”

Aristotle’s point then is that man is meant or designed for some end, and that if he can only find out what it is, and after striving to reach it find it, he will find Happiness.

I cannot but think that there is some confusion of thought among writers on ethics in the use they

make of the term Happiness. It is not always clear whether they mean by this a state or an activity. That the state can only be realised by an activity can well be imagined. But in investigating the *summum bonum* there must be perfect clearness as to what is meant.

It is clear from Aristotle that when he spoke of Happiness he meant something that was not capable of realisation by the lower animals. He did not mean simply a state of contentment and satisfaction. Everyone would agree that it was better to be a discontented man than a contented pig. And so, when Happiness is set forth as the *summum bonum* of human effort, it must surely be meant that the Happiness, regarded as a state of satisfaction, a state of pleasurable feeling, is to result from the realisation of true manhood. When Happiness is set forth as the end of human life then, unless some clear definition is given of the term, we are left in uncertainty whether it is meant that the reasonable thing for man is to seek for pleasurable feelings.

It is a fairly obvious criticism to make on Aristotle that he assumes Happiness to be the supreme good before he has defined what Happiness is. It is according to him that which is sought for as an end in itself, and not for the sake of something else. If it be the case that Happiness is sought for its own sake, why is there any uncertainty as to what Happiness is? That there may be doubt what will produce it, is intelligible. But there cannot be any doubt what a thing is which is sought for its own sake.

I take it that what is needed to make this point clear is to carefully discriminate the two factors of the *summum bonum*. These we may call its active and passive factors. As when we speak of a man as a 'good man,' we mean that in him the qualities which make our ideal man are conspicuous, and that these qualities are displayed in action, so when we speak of the 'supreme good' of human life we must include in this term a perfect human activity. But reason demands that this should be in a state of perfect happiness. •

## CHAPTER IV.

CONSCIENCE AND REASON.



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IT seems well now to say something of the relation of Conscience to Reason. I have already said that I regard conscience as the imperative aspect of moral reason. Conscience then, in mathematical language, is a function of the moral reason. But I take it that conscience is also a function of reason other than moral. In so far as conscience is a function of moral reason I hold that Intuitionism is true. In so far as conscience is a function of reason other than moral Intuitionism seems to me not true.

The intuitionist view of ethics is in principle this: that we know the rightness of actions intuitively, or, in other words, when the conscience tells us that some action is wrong, it is not that we have reasoned out that it is wrong, but that by a special faculty called conscience we know it to be wrong. This is, I believe, a false psychology. Conscience is much too complex a thing to be explained as a special faculty.

At the same time it seems to me clear that Intuitionism is partly true, and that we have an intuitive

knowledge that there are certain things which we ought to do. Unless there is some 'ought' intuitively known, there can be no ought at all. For by no possible process of reasoning can you get an ought out of a not-ought. But if there be some one moral duty known by intuition, other moral duties may be deduced from it by a process of ordinary reasoning. We have here an ethical syllogism by which an ethical or moral proposition is deduced from an ethical proposition and another proposition not ethical. Thus

I ought to do  $x$ .  
To do  $x$  it is necessary to do  $y$ ,  
Therefore I ought to do  $y$ .

But it is important to notice that doing  $y$  must be an exercise of my volition, otherwise the syllogism is fallacious. We could not argue that because I ought to speak the truth, and because I cannot speak the truth without increasing my own happiness, therefore I ought to increase my own happiness. For here, in the non-ethical premise, the increasing of my own happiness may not express an activity of my volition, but only a result which will follow on speaking the truth. This being so the conclusion does not follow. The only conclusion that could be drawn from these two premises would be that it is not a moral duty to me *not* to increase my happiness; or in other words, that it is right to increase my happiness.

In the above syllogism then it is necessary that doing  $x$  and doing  $y$  should both express an activity of the subject's volition. If this is so the 'ought' of the conclusion is moral, as is the ought of the ethical premise.

This kind of ethical reasoning which can be expressed in the form of the above syllogism is not uncommon. There are instances of it in the New Testament. Thus in the Epistle to the Romans St. Paul writes, "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves . . . for Christ also pleased not himself" (Rom. xv. 1, 3).

It is here implied that Christians ought to be imitators of Christ, and this imitation makes necessary the duty of pleasing not ourselves.

There is a very remarkable moral appeal in St. John's first Epistle: "If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No man hath beheld God at any time: if we love one another God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us." It is here taken for granted that we ought to shew love to those who have shewn love to us. The argument may be expressed in two syllogisms:

1. We ought to shew love to those who have shewn love to us.

God has shewn love to us,

Therefore we ought to shew love to God.

2. We ought to shew love to God.

We cannot shew love to God except by shewing love to one another,

Therefore we ought to shew love to one another.

The conclusion here has been deduced from one ethical proposition, namely, 'We ought to shew love to those who have shewn love to us,' and two non-ethical propositions, 'God hath shewn love to us,' and

‘We cannot shew love to God except by shewing love to one another.’ This last seems to be what St. John means when he says: ‘No man hath beheld God at any time.’

It becomes clear then that to derive an ethical proposition, which is an expression of moral duty, by a process of reasoning, it is necessary to have one ethical proposition to start with and no more than one. All the other propositions made use of are non-ethical. It would of course be utterly useless to attempt to deduce ethical propositions by a logical process unless we had some admitted ethical proposition to form the ethical premise of the first syllogism. Nor is it of any use to have more than one.

We see then that if to do  $x$ , which is my moral duty, it is necessary for me to do  $y$ , then to do  $y$  becomes to me a moral duty, and the reason why the doing of  $y$  is a moral duty is that the doing of  $x$  is a moral duty. If we proceed further to enquire why the doing of  $x$  is a moral duty, one of two reasons must be found for this. Either the doing of  $x$  is a moral duty because it is necessary to the doing of  $a$ , say, itself a moral duty. Or the doing of  $x$  is a moral duty because it is intuitively seen to be such. In this case the reason for it lies in the nature of the case. Unless there is some one moral duty the reason of which lies in the nature of the case, there can be no moral duty at all, and no science of ethics worthy of the name of science. There must be at least one intuitively known moral duty, and there may of course be more than one, if there are any at all.

Thus if the moral intuitions were to remain constant moral duties would vary according to the growth of experience interpreted by reason other than moral. Say that it is a moral intuition to shew gratitude and to make return for benefits received from another person who has voluntarily bestowed them. Endless moral duties may flow by a perfectly logical sequence from this one. A Christian and another not a Christian have, say, both alike this moral intuition of gratitude. Yet what consequences follow from it to the Christian who believes St. John's words that "God so loved us," which consequences do not apply to the case of the non-Christian who does not know God's love! If we know that we have freely received, we know also that we ought freely to give. Ignorance of the fact that we have freely received would mean that we could not know that we ought freely to give, even though the moral intuition to show gratitude for benefits were ours.

A critical case for testing any theory of the variations of conscience is that of the trial of Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. I have never yet seen a satisfactory explanation of this moral perplexity. Yet it seems to me that if the above analysis of the conscience be true, we can explain this incident without any shock to the moral reason.

For if we suppose, as just now, that it is a moral intuition to shew gratitude and to make return for benefits received, but that it is not a moral intuition not to kill—on this point I propose to say something

presently—then the moral perplexity is removed. For Abraham has, according to the story in Genesis, received a child in his old age, whose birth had been announced beforehand to him by a messenger from God. The child is born in due course. He is obviously from the circumstances of his conception and birth a divine gift. What gratitude can the father shew for this signal favour? It seems to me possible that the people among whom Abraham was living were in the habit of sacrificing their children to their gods. If so, here was Abraham's trial. Does he owe less to his God than these people were ready to give to theirs? Ought he not to sacrifice his son to the God who has given him?

And it must be remembered that the whole point of the story depends on the fact that this which God demanded of Abraham, and which accorded with his moral reason, was quite contrary to his altruistic instincts. The temptation, as we use the word, was to *disobey*. The temptation was *not* to slay his son. All the instincts of a father's affection rebelled against the command; and yet he owed his son to God. His moral duty was hard to fulfil, but it was clear. It was God's trial of him, and he stood the test. There is nothing to shock the moral reason in the conclusion of the story.

Had Abraham wanted to slay his son, had an evil instinct prompted him to take his son's life, and had he made a divine command an excuse for doing what he wanted to do, the story would have shocked our moral reason. As it is, I do not think it need at all.

But it may be said that this explanation of a great moral difficulty, though satisfactory in its conclusion, proceeds from a false hypothesis, namely, that it is not an intuitively known moral duty to refrain from killing a fellow-man. Against such a supposition I can imagine that some may recoil with horror, as possibly it seems to them so obviously intuitive not to murder. But I think that an impartial investigation of the matter will shew that the hypothesis made above to justify the story of Abraham's meditated sacrifice of Isaac is correct after all.

For let it be remembered first of all that we do not even to-day with all our enlightenment consider it in all cases wrong to take a fellow-man's life. It is true that the taking of life is regulated by law, yet still life is taken away, and even Christians take part in war which involves the slaughter of their fellows. I am not here discussing the ethics of war, for this is alien to the present subject, but I am insisting on the fact that man does even to-day under certain circumstances take away the life of man and that deliberately. This is a fact to be borne in mind. Further, I do not think that we are justified in regarding it as a primary moral intuition not to kill. For how would those who take this view explain the conduct of Moses recorded in Exodus ii. 11, 12?

When people regard it as a moral intuition to abstain from murder, they are confusing, as it seems to me, two things, namely, moral intuition and virtuous instinct. It has become with us an instinct to refrain

from murder, and we shudder and recoil from the very thought of bloodshedding in revenge or hatred. This is one of those instincts of which I spoke in the last chapter, which have been acquired for us as instincts by the virtues of former generations. We do not count it a virtue to abstain from murder, because our instinct to do so is so strong apart from all motive of self-respect.

But if it is said : Well, but it is certainly vicious to murder, I reply that of course it is. We know that we ought not to murder if we are tempted to do so, that is to say if some instinct tends to overpower the virtuous instinct of abstention from murder, such as the instinct of revenge or the instinct to have something for our own which is kept from us by the life of another. And we know all the more that we ought not to murder because we feel within us the virtuous instinct against which the lower instinct is striving. It is our moral reason which tells us that the one instinct is lower than the other.

But the moral duty of abstention from murder is really based on the general moral duty of refraining from hatred or injury of another. Jesus Christ traced murder to its proper source : "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill ; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment : but I say unto you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment ; and whosoever shall say to his brother Raca [an expression of contempt] shall be in danger of the council ; and whosoever shall say Thou fool [an ex-

pression of condemnation] shall be in danger of the Gehenna of fire" (St. Matt. v. 21, ff.).

As I understand this passage, we have here three gradations of punishment. Our Lord is not instituting a legal system. Such was far from the intention of Him Who declared unmistakably that His kingdom was not of this world. The three degrees of punishment ascending from the cognisance of the local court through trial by the Sanhedrim, the highest spiritual jurisdiction, to the punishment of the worst criminal, are designed to shew the ascending gravity of the sins of anger, contempt, and condemnation.<sup>1</sup> The root sin is, according to Christ's teaching, anger or hatred. We may compare St. John's words in his first Epistle (iii. 15): "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

The moral reason then gives the duty of abstention from hatred or injury. The moral life of men in its earlier stages was of course only struggling towards the recognition of this, and the duty of abstention from murder would receive an early recognition, murder being the extreme instance of hatred.

It is nothing to the purpose to say that abstention from murder only came about to make the life of a community at all possible, and that the law of the community, established in its own interest, made murder criminal. Human law such as this could not prove lasting unless it had its basis in the great moral law of God. Men who suffered the penalty of

<sup>1</sup> See Lange's Gospel of St. Matthew on this passage.

the law of their community would recognise the justice and not merely the necessity of their sentence. Human law, while it supports itself by an appeal to cosmic principles—what is implied in this expression later chapters will reveal—is yet based on eternal laws of God. That it is possible that human law should not be based on eternal laws of God I fully recognise, for this is what we mean when we speak of a law as unjust. Unjust laws must in time give place to just laws, and the laws of man approximate more and more to the eternal laws of God. But the kingdoms of this world, which enforce the law, are not free from the cosmic spirit, yet are they God's agents for advancing the eternal law until they become "the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ." In saying this I am anticipating much that will be worked out more fully in later chapters of this essay.

I have said enough now to justify the line I took up in regard to the story of Abraham's meditated sacrifice of his son Isaac. The gratitude he owed to God was a moral duty proceeding from self-respect. In obeying the command of God he acted morally, and his obedience was a righteous obedience.

Of course it may be said that Abraham's notions of what God required of him were crude. This seems to me undeniable; and it were absurd to expect to find in Abraham Christian thoughts about God. God's commands to men are, it would seem, a function of their moral state, and these cannot appear the same to a being with moral reason fully developed and to a

being whose moral reason is as yet only struggling to an understanding of itself.

It seems to me that one of the earliest intuitions of the moral reason would be the nobility and the duty of gratitude. And along with the cognition that we ought to shew gratitude is the instinct to do it.

But it may be said that the instinct is often but a weak one, and unable of itself to withstand stronger and selfish instincts. This is true. The weakness of the instinct of gratitude may result from our own selfishness which blinds us to the extent to which gratitude is due. For we find ourselves unable often to see that when we have received a benefit from some other person, the benefit has been bestowed disinterestedly. We are too ready to assume that when people do us good they have some ulterior motive other than the satisfaction of doing the good. And it is possible to withhold gratitude on the ground that it is not really due. The instinct to show gratitude is not blind. The reason must first be satisfied that gratitude is due, and the instinct then becomes very strong.

It may seem that gratitude is a merely mercenary instinct. It is such an obvious duty to pay our debts, and one that no self-respecting person can refuse to recognise and act upon. It is something if it be allowed that self-respect as distinguished from selfishness (and the two are absolutely distinct) is the basis of gratitude, for this is to allow that it has its root in the moral reason. "What is thine is mine, and

what is mine is my own" is the thought of selfishness, that is the natural unspiritualised thought. "What is mine is thine" is a thought that springs from self-respect, even if there be appended to the words, "because I owe it to thee." Only a being endowed with moral reason can have a cognition of a debt. This may at first seem strange, but I think that reflection will convince us that self-respect is necessary to the acknowledgment that we owe anything.

But it may seem that we are passing from the 'ought' to the notion of what we owe, which is not necessarily the same; that while it is likely that 'ought' is in origin the preterite of 'owe,' the two words have so separated from one another that it is mere equivocation to bring them together again. This equivocation I am most anxious to avoid, and although I think that in the end it will come to be recognised that all moral duties can be performed from a motive of gratitude, I am bound to recognise that we have a cognition of other duties in the first place which do not seem to be reasoned from the intuitively known moral duty of gratitude. But what it does seem to me important to recognise is the fact that gratitude is both instinct and duty. As conduct does not proceed wholly from reason, but requires instinct to carry it out, and as the instinct of gratitude can become stronger than all other instincts, it is of the very greatest importance.

We have, as it seems, knowledge of other moral duties than gratitude through the discipline of law and moral training, but these moral duties, which it is

the part of education to set before us, could never become moral duties unless they were seen to have their basis in the moral reason. In what way then we may ask are these supported by an intuition of the moral reason? My own view of the matter is this, that by the moral reason we discern, as I have already said, the dignity and worth of being, and we recognise the nobility of sacrificing ourselves for the good of others; and it is just because we see that the laws of restriction which are imposed upon us by early training require us to control our instincts for the good of others that these laws become to us expressions of moral duty. In so far as these general moral laws are based on reason, they depend on the moral intuition that we ought to live for the good of others. We recognise that a being who deliberately chooses a selfish life is contemptible, and that true self-realisation comes from sacrifice of self in the interests of others. We inherit the rules from the past, but they justify themselves to reason because we soon detect that temptation to evade them proceeds from selfish desires; and these are just what moral reason demands that we should control.

For my own part I have no objection to interpret moral duty in terms of the promotion of the *happiness* of others, provided that it be not stated that it is a moral duty to promote my own happiness. This I could not allow. I naturally desire my own happiness, and what I naturally desire there can be no moral duty to me to promote. To seek my own happiness does not seem to be a requirement made by my moral

reason. It may be otherwise when we substitute the word 'Good' for happiness; but this will require some further investigation, which I think it better to reserve for the next chapter.

My view of conscience then is this: that it is the requirement seemingly made by circumstances interpreted by reason to carry out that which the moral reason absolutely and without condition declares to be good. I believe it to be the voice of God in the soul of man, as I have already said. But that it is a voice saying 'Do this,' without giving us any knowledge of the reason why we are to do it, I cannot allow.

It seems well now, before concluding this chapter, to say something of the distinction which has been made by moralists between "moral duties" and "positive duties." Here, says Butler in the *Analogy*, "lies the distinction between what is positive and what is moral in religion. Moral *precepts* are precepts the reasons of which we see; positive *precepts* are precepts the reasons of which we do not see. Moral *duties* arise out of the nature of the case itself, prior to external command. Positive *duties* do not arise out of the nature of the case but from external command, nor would they be duties at all were it not for such command received from him whose creatures and subjects we are."<sup>1</sup>

We must observe that there is a twofold distinction made here. There is a distinction between what is

<sup>1</sup> *Analogy of Religion*, Part II., chap. i.

“moral” and what is “positive,” and a distinction between “precepts” and “duties.”

A precept, in Butler’s language, is an external command which may or may not find an echo or response in the conscience. If the precept does find a response in the conscience and moral reason, it is a moral precept, but not otherwise. The precept ‘Thou shalt not steal’ is a moral precept if it finds itself supported by the moral reason. And it is by the moral reason that the reason of it is discerned. The precept ‘Do this in remembrance of me’ does not find itself interpreted by the moral reason. We do not then see the reason of it. This is a positive precept.

It must be clearly understood that the reasons or reason of a moral precept are moral reasons. To shew more clearly what is meant by this we will consider the precept ‘Do this in remembrance of me.’ Now suppose that we were told that unless we obeyed this precept we could not be partakers of Christ in the fullest sense; and suppose, for the purpose of the argument, that we believed this. It may be said that we now see the reason of the precept. Does it then become to us a moral precept? Clearly it does not become to us a moral precept, because we now know the reason of it in the sense explained. This may be a cause-and-effect reason, a practical reason, but it is not a moral reason. Unless it be to me a moral duty to become a partaker of Christ, then the precept ‘Do this in remembrance of me’ does not become to me a moral precept, just because I know that if I do not obey it I shall fail to become a partaker of Christ.

If, however, it were to me a moral duty to become a partaker of Christ, which partaking I knew to depend upon "doing this," it would become my moral duty to "do this," and the precept would be to me a moral precept.

We want now to understand in what sense the word 'duty' is applicable in the expression "positive duty." What is there in common between "moral duties" and "positive duties" to justify the application of the same term 'duties' to both? A precept is a command, and thus we can see the appropriateness of this term as applied to a moral precept 'Thou shalt not steal' and a positive precept 'Do this in remembrance of me.' But in what sense can the term 'duty' be applied to what Butler calls a 'positive duty'? There is really no justification for the use of the term 'duty' here except it be a moral duty to obey the author of the positive precept, in which case, let it be noticed, it becomes a moral duty to "do this," and the *precept itself* becomes a moral one.

If then there is any distinction at all between moral duties and positive duties it may be said to lie in this: that while a moral duty is a duty of obedience to a precept which finds a response in the conscience and moral reason, a positive duty is a duty of obedience to him who has given the precept, the moral reason of which we cannot see.

For my own part I think the distinction between moral and positive *duties* is not a desirable one. Nor would it ever have been made but for the fact that there was no clear recognition of the fact that

duty must justify itself to moral reason, and must not appeal merely to prudence. Bishop Butler in his anxiety to persuade people that it is as imprudent to disobey the positive precepts of Christ as it is to disobey the moral precepts has tried to include obedience to both as of the same order by using a common term 'duties' for both. The result is, as it appears to me, some confusion of idea.

If I think that in disobeying a positive precept of Christ I shall perhaps be the loser myself in the long run, it may be prudent to obey, but it does not become to me a moral duty so to do. If I obey merely because I think I shall lose if I do not, I do not act morally. But if I think that in not heeding such a precept I am depriving myself of some good, such good commanding itself to my moral reason and not merely appealing to my prudence, I recognise that it would become to me a moral duty to obey. Unless we have some clear definition of the Good we shall be unable to decide whether or not it would be likely to become a moral duty to obey a positive precept.

Butler's point of view was that we ought to render obedience to God because we are His creatures and subjects. But then it must be remembered that it is only through the conscience that we can know assuredly that God has spoken. An external positive precept purporting to come from God has not the force of a moral precept whose reason we discern with our moral reason. There is, if we may say so, an element of uncertainty about every positive precept, while we may become quite sure that God has

spoken in a precept which commends itself to our moral reason. Thus there are men who listen with strict attention to the dictates of conscience, but who pay little heed to the ordinances of religion because they are not persuaded of their divine origin.

For my own part I do not think that obedience should be rendered to a positive precept of Christ by one who was in doubt as to the claims of Christ and the efficacy of His means of grace, on the ground that His claims might be true and it were imprudent to disobey. I do not myself hold that what is called self-love, unless it is rational and *morally* rational, forms any part of man's moral duty. Self-love, unless it means self-respect, or respect for the worth of self as a man, means nothing better than selfishness, which is exactly that which it is the function of the moral reason to correct. On this more will be said in the next chapter.

What prudence demands of us is not moral duty, what self-respect demands is. If my self-respect demands of me obedience to any person, it becomes to me a moral duty to obey ; if obedience proceeds from fear of consequences, it has no moral quality. I have no duty to do anything from fear. Fear may be a useful instinct, but it is not that which should prompt us to perform our moral duty.

But if it be said that the fear of God is a moral quality, I should reply that it certainly is if it be coupled with love for Him. Reverence for the Perfection of the Divine Being is man's highest duty and privilege, but that Perfection must be known in part

before such reverence is possible. I hold that every moral duty is a duty of obedience to the demands of divine Perfection; and it is to set forth this truth that I have entered upon the present enquiry as to the reason of man's moral nature.



## CHAPTER V.

HAPPINESS AND THE GOOD.



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IN *The Descent of Man* Darwin sets forth the following proposition which seems to him “in a high degree probable”: “That any animal whatever endowed with well-marked social instincts, the parental and filial affections being here included, would inevitably acquire a moral sense or conscience, as soon as its intellectual powers had become as well, or nearly as well developed as in man.” His reasons he sets forth thus:

“Firstly, the social instincts lead an animal to take pleasure in the society of his fellows, to feel a certain amount of sympathy with them, and to perform various services for them. The services may be of a definite and evidently instinctive nature; or there may be only a wish and readiness, as with most of the higher social animals to aid their fellows in certain general ways. But these feelings and services are by no means extended to all the individuals of the same species, only to those of the same association.

Secondly, as soon as the mental faculties had be-

come highly developed, images of all past actions and motives would be incessantly passing through the brain of each individual; and that feeling of dissatisfaction, or even misery, which invariably results, as we shall hereafter see, from any unsatisfied instinct, would arise, as often as it was perceived that the enduring and always present social instinct had yielded to some other instinct, at the time stronger, but neither enduring in its nature nor leaving behind it a very vivid impression. It is clear that many instinctive desires, such as that of hunger, are in their nature of short duration, and after being satisfied are not readily or vividly recalled.

*Thirdly*, after the power of language had been acquired, and the wishes of the community could be expressed, the common opinion how each member ought to act for the general public good would naturally become in a paramount degree the guide to action. But it should be borne in mind that however great weight we may attribute to public opinion, our regard for the approbation and disapprobation of our fellows depends on sympathy, which as we shall see forms an essential part of the social instinct, and is indeed its foundation stone.

*Lastly*, habit in the individual would ultimately play a very important part in guiding the conduct of each member; for the social instinct, together with sympathy, is, like any other instinct, greatly strengthened by habit, and so consequently would be obedience to the wishes and judgment of the community.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Descent of Man*, chap. iv.

These four propositions on which the main proposition is made to depend are proved by Darwin, and proved as I cannot but acknowledge convincingly. But what I cannot see is that the main proposition is established. For I cannot under any of these four headings see a trace of conscience as I understand it. Darwin has not proved how man could thus have come to have a cognition of a *moral ought*; if he has established any 'ought' at all it is only a prudential one: I ought to live for others if I want to be happy. There is no categorical ought: I ought to live for others. It may be that in speaking of the "mental faculties" Darwin meant to include what is here called moral reason, but this does not seem clear.

What is wanted before we can hope ever to get at the rationale of the conscience is that a perfectly clear idea should be formed of the function of moral reason. It is not enough to say that our happiness depends upon being in harmony with our fellowmen, or even upon our promoting the happiness of others, though this seems to me strictly true. The moral reason discerns the appropriateness of this fact, and not simply the fact itself. Experience may prove that the greatest happiness is found in contributing to the happiness of others; moral reason justifies this and tells us that it ought to be so.

But in saying this I am making use of the expression 'ought to be' which, as I have said in the second chapter, I think it better to avoid. I will then say that moral reason enables us to discern the fitness of

the dependence of truest happiness on deliberate service and promotion of the happiness of others.

It seems desirable, as we have come to speak of happiness, to say something about Hedonism and Utilitarianism, and to point out what, as it seems to me, is deficient in both of them, and what is needed before the problem of the Good can be properly solved.

Hedonism says: "Seek your own happiness, not necessarily a selfish happiness, do those things which give you real satisfaction; this is that which it is reasonable to do." Of course Hedonism can be made to seem contemptible, especially if we use the word 'pleasure' instead of the word 'happiness,' but it is my desire to see the best that Hedonism has to offer, and therefore I will make use of the word 'happiness,' which sets the system in a more favourable light.

Utilitarianism says: "Seek to promote as much happiness in the world as you can. Let not the thought of your own happiness blind you to the need that others feel for happiness. Remember that you are only one among many. Seek the general happiness. This is reasonable."

Now it is most important to be perfectly clear what we mean when we speak of acting reasonably or according to reason. If I have made up my mind to some end, and I deliberate what means will bring it about, and adopt such as seem to me most likely to accomplish it, I so far act reasonably. It is reasonable to do that which will bring about a result which we desire and which will not effect some other result

which we should desire to avoid. This action may be called reasonable. Only a being endowed with reason is capable of such deliberation as to means to an end. But this reason is not moral reason; it is not what Kant calls "practical reason." It is reason determining action but not conduct. The end chosen and sought for is not dictated by reason, but the means thereto are known by reason.

In this sense the Hedonistic system may be called reasonable. The Hedonist says: You desire happiness all of you. Make sure then what will produce it. Profit by the experience of past ages and by the experience of your own generation and learn which is the path of happiness, and then steadily follow it. What, it may be said, can be more reasonable than this? We must be meant to be happy, only we have to find out the conditions of happiness. Make these your study and you will then have a knowledge of life which will lead you into that which you desire.

Now this sort of argument is plausible. But let us be perfectly clear as to this point, that the quest for happiness, while it may be natural, has not its root in reason. Our own happiness as an end of our action is not, I maintain, prescribed by reason.

Reason which determines the end of conduct as distinguished from the means whereby that end can be reached is moral reason. Moral reason sets before us the worth or dignity of being. And I contend that a being who merely sought his happiness in indifference as to what would produce it, if only he could find it in

the end, would appear to one endowed with moral reason as a being of a low order.

The Hedonist's advice is excellent for one who has made up his mind that all he cares for is to find his own happiness. But the Hedonist does not prescribe an end of life and human endeavour which justifies itself to the moral reason. The quest for happiness does not arise from the demands of reason. I do not say that it is unreasonable to seek for happiness. That indeed is a point which I do not attempt now to speak of, for it seems to me that it would be impossible to answer the question whether it is unreasonable to seek for happiness or anything else unless we had it clearly stated what the word 'unreasonable' was intended to mean.

When we come to Utilitarianism the case is different. Utilitarianism by some of its upholders has laid claim to be based on reason. The end prescribed by the Utilitarian philosopher, namely universal happiness, is said to be in this sense reasonable. We must enquire then whether the Utilitarian formula of universal happiness is supported by the moral reason.

In *The Methods of Ethics*<sup>1</sup> Professor Sidgwick has propounded two axioms of moral duty which are, according to him, ultimately reasonable. They are these: 1. I ought not to prefer a present lesser good to a future greater good. 2. I ought not to prefer my own lesser good to the greater good of another. These are, according to Professor Sidgwick, intuitively known moral duties.

<sup>1</sup> Book III. chap. xiii.

Now when we come to examine them we must bear in mind first of all that 'good' here means happiness. For I cannot find that the ultimate good is, according to Professor Sidgwick, other than happiness. We must then take these axioms to be: 1. I ought not to prefer a present lesser happiness to a future greater happiness. 2. I ought not to prefer my own lesser happiness to the greater happiness of another.

We have here an attempt on Professor Sidgwick's part to meet the difficulty involved in the Utilitarian formula, as to how much of the general happiness that it is our duty to produce is to be our own happiness, and how much is to be the happiness of others. But here I find a great difficulty, for I fail entirely to see how the promotion of my own happiness is a moral duty. It may be prudent to promote my own happiness and to look for means for doing this, but I do not see that my moral reason makes any demand upon me to seek my own happiness. I do not see that a being who seeks his own happiness, even though he sacrifices present lesser happiness for the prospect of greater happiness to come afterwards, is on this account a being of greater worth or dignity. I can see that a being who seeks to promote the happiness of others is one whom the moral reason commends. I may admire a being who can calculate the happiness-producing effects of certain kinds of conduct as clever, but he is not a higher moral being for all his cleverness. When then I am confronted by Professor Sidgwick's two axioms above quoted, I cannot assent to the first as a moral axiom, for the

'ought' seems to be purely prudential, and the second does not seem to me at all obvious for reasons which I will now try to explain.

I contend that in promoting happiness in others in preference to the promotion of our own supposed happiness we really gain happiness ourselves far greater than any that we forfeit. And therefore in preferring the greater happiness of another to my own lesser happiness, I am all the while adding to my own happiness. In other words, the axiom is meaningless. And here, as it seems to me, lies the weakness of the whole Utilitarian philosophy. In so far as it insists on universal happiness, and on the duty of contributing to it, it really does appeal to the moral reason; it is thus far reasonable. But when it begins to compare our own happiness with the happiness which we promote in others, it seems to me to go wrong. In fact the error of the system lies in interpreting the Good as happiness. It ignores the fact that what really appeals to the moral reason is not happiness itself, but the promoting of happiness in others. I recognise fully that I ought, actively and of deliberate choice, to increase the happiness of my fellowmen, but this increasing of the happiness of others does not detract in any way from my own happiness; quite the contrary, it adds to it. And in promoting the happiness of another I am all the while realising happiness for myself. This is the purest happiness that is to be experienced, and our moral reason tells us that it is fitting that it should be so.

According to many moral philosophers, and Pro-

fessor Sidgwick is of the number, rational self-love is conceived of as a moral duty. Now it seems to me that it all depends on what you mean by self-love, as to whether it deserves to be called rational and whether it can be called a duty. If self-love means calculating what will produce most happiness for oneself and doing it because it will produce most happiness regardless of what it is save only that it be productive of happiness, I do not see that there is anything here that commends itself to the moral reason. I do not hold that there is any moral duty to me to realise my happiness or to exchange a lesser happiness for a greater one by prudential calculations.

Rational self-love, as I understand it, is a self-love which has its basis in the moral reason. It is essentially not selfishness. Too often by rational love is meant a sort of calculating by the aid of reason other than moral what will produce what result, and then doing that which will produce some result which we desire, and which will not bring about some result we do not desire. This may be prudence, but it is not the prudence of virtue. It does not proceed from self-respect. It has no moral quality, though it may show cleverness. It is not morally rational.

It may be said, Surely if you know that a certain course of conduct will bring you into eternal condemnation you ought to abstain from it? I would allow that it would be prudent so to do, but I fail to see that the 'ought' is here anything but prudential. I have no cognition of a moral duty to save myself from eternal condemnation. I naturally desire not to

be eternally condemned. It is not of the least use for instruction in morality to appeal to men and say, "You ought to do so and so, or you will suffer for it." You may teach them prudence of a kind, but not morality. I do not mean by this to imply that prudence is useless, only that it is not a moral quality. It may have utility, but it does not provoke our moral admiration independently of the end to which it is put.

But to return once more to Utilitarianism. I recognise that this is the most Christian attempt to rationalise and to reduce to system human duty. John Stuart Mill held that in propounding Utilitarianism as a philosophy of ethics he was all the while adopting the principles of Christ's moral teaching. He was right, as it seems to me, in so far as Utilitarianism sets forth the happiness of all mankind as worthy of our active consideration; but I think that Utilitarian philosophy is wrong, and will come to see itself to be wrong as regards its interpretation of the Good in terms of happiness alone. At the same time I recognise that you cannot state the Good except by means of the term 'happiness.' I regard happiness as a necessary factor in any definition of ultimate Good, but, as I have already said at the end of the third chapter, the Good must contain an activity as well as a passivity. Happiness describes the state of the person affected by it. It is not therefore the whole of the Good, lacking as it does the content of activity. The question that has to be answered in order to reach a conclusion as to man's

*summum bonum* is: What activity producing happiness is a perfect satisfaction to the moral reason?

In setting myself in opposition to Utilitarian teaching I wish emphatically to state that I do not do so because I regard the whole as radically wrong. I do not at all. I think that in the form in which it has been so ably developed by Professor Sidgwick it is of great use and value in the systematising of ethical thought. But I am persuaded that as a philosophy of human life it is deficient, and this is shewn, as I contend, by its inability to interpret the Good save in terms of happiness, which is in itself suggestive of passivity and not of activity.

Nor can I acquiesce in any view that the rationale of man's moral nature lies in its being a contrivance for making human life happier only. It must, as I conceive it, have for its end the promotion of the Good, inclusive of happiness. But if happiness regarded, as a passivity only, be intended, why could not this have been brought about by infallible instincts, and why need there have been the dualism of man's nature, which is that which is the cause of his dissatisfaction and general unhappiness? I cannot regard morality as merely a means for making the wheels of human life revolve more smoothly. At the same time, believing as I do in an absolutely Benevolent Creator—such belief seems to me to be a demand of the moral reason—I am convinced that man's moral nature is a necessary step whereby he may be brought into perfect happiness—a happiness which could not be experienced but for the preliminary discords from

which we now suffer. Man's slowness to read the mystery of his own nature seems to me to arise largely from his slowness to grasp the Perfection of Divine Being, by which alone that nature can be explained.

Any philosophy of human life which seeks to explain that life in terms of itself alone, and not in reference to God Himself, is I believe doomed to failure. Any attempt to harmonise its mysteries except by a knowledge of God is futile. Of course if the agnostic position be taken up and it be assumed as an axiom of philosophic thought that God is unknowable by finite creatures such as man, the problem of the Good seems utterly hopeless. But the fact that our moral reason gives us the power to discern goodness, and to check and refuse to accept unworthy thoughts of God, seems to me to argue further that God is knowable, and that our knowledge of Him can be checked and purified by this same moral reason. That which gives us the ability to discern nobility of human life gives us also the power to welcome a message of the Perfection of the Divine Being which is brought to us in the form of a Perfect Human Character Whose words and life command the admiration of man's moral reason to-day as they have done these now nearly nineteen centuries.

But I doubt whether we have yet got to the real meaning of the Christian Revelation. It is surprising that the sublimity of its appeal to the moral reason of man should have been so often lost sight of, that it should have been even presented to man by its

own professed teachers in a form little better than Hedonism. The theological thought of our day, however, gives promise of better things. The grandeur of the Christian Revelation is being revealed to us I believe as it has never been seen before, and the modern doctrine of evolution enables us to understand much that has hitherto been obscure.

But we must give up talking of the "sanctions of religion" as if these were but a system of rewards and punishments. We must cease to be Hedonists in spirit, for the Hedonistic spirit is cosmic and carnal, and it is this spirit which it is the function of the moral reason to correct. Moralists, if they would establish a philosophy of moral life, must take account of the Christian philosophy and try to understand what the Gospel really is.

And it is, as it seems to me, quite useless to attempt to set up any system of moral philosophy without a metaphysical basis. Here lies I think a great deficiency in Professor Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*. He owns that he purposely avoids metaphysics; but how can the problem of the Good be solved without some theory of the meaning of life?

Before proceeding to set forth, as I intend to do in the remaining chapters of this essay, the Christian philosophy of life so far as it explains man's moral nature, I think it will be well to collect together the results of this and the three preceding chapters. I have been trying to lay hold of some clear idea of what we mean by man's moral nature, so as to under-

stand what are the facts of which we have to give an explanation. It is not man's social nature that we are seeking to explain; it is not his prudence, nor his cleverness, nor his marvellous instincts whereby human progress in civilisation is secured. By man's moral nature I understand the possession by him of moral reason whereby he judges of the dignity of his own being. This moral reason which man holds in possession (some men have it more highly developed than others) makes its demands upon us in the conscience, calling upon us not to be led by the instinct of the moment, but to rationalise our instincts to a higher end than the enjoyment of the moment. The gratification of every instinct promises enjoyment, otherwise instinct would not be instinct. It is a property of instinct that when it asserts itself, some pain and discomfort is felt in the suppression of it. Man's moral reason tells him that the mere gratification of instinct is not the end of his being. Reason requires of him to realise himself in some better way. Moral reason when it operates does not make man more clever or more prudent but benevolent.

And we must ever bear in mind that Benevolence or Love is not the same as altruism. Altruism is instinctive, and has not its origin in the moral reason. It has utility and it may even furnish material for reflection on the part of the moral reason. But so far as it is not deliberate, not indulged for the sake of the end, but only for the gratification of the instinct of the moment, it is not moral.

Man's moral reason does not set Happiness before

him as the sole end of life. According to my view of the matter the deliberate promotion of happiness is as important as the happiness itself. This indeed is the demand of the moral reason, so far as it interrupts the ordinary course of instinctive action. It calls upon us to realise ourselves in the promotion of the happiness of others. It sets this before us as a worthy end of life and makes us see that to turn away from this is to turn away from a high and noble form of self-realisation.

The Hedonist may ask whether it is worth while to adopt this form of self-realisation considering the extreme uncertainty and the shortness of life. He may argue that it is of no use to realise ourselves temporarily in such a way. Certainly I allow that the moral reason demands immortality as necessary for the explanation of man's moral nature.

But while I hold that Benevolence or Love is the end prescribed by the moral reason I do not hold that in the exercise of this man is forfeiting happiness for himself. Quite the contrary. I think he is finding a happiness which can nowhere else be found. But I should not think it right to appeal to men and to say that this is what they ought to do because it brings them happiness. I hold that the moral reason forbids us to set our happiness first, regardless of that whereby the happiness is to be found. The moral reason requires us to set before us as an end not merely the feeling of happiness but the activity whereby that happiness is produced. While the Hedonist is content with the maxim, 'Seek your happiness,'

the moral reason says 'Seek your happiness in the promotion of the happiness of others.' In other words I take it that the Good does not only contain happiness but also the deliberate activity of its production.

It was Christian teaching that first solved the apparent contradiction between love of others and self-love. But this teaching is utterly obscured as often as love, which is rightly interpreted as promotion of good in the person loved, is taken to mean the promotion of the happiness of that person regardless of the active cause of the happiness. In other words when the Good is interpreted as Happiness only, the old contradiction returns in full force and cannot be evaded. Self-love, if it means only the promotion of the happiness of self, is not a moral quality at all. But if self-love be the realisation of the Good for self it may well be that there is no ultimate contradiction between self-love and love of others.

The real problem then is: What is the Good? And the answer must be supported by moral reason and not merely by instinctive desires for happiness. Can the *summum bonum* be determined? I contend that it can, and that it is all the while contained in the teaching of Jesus Christ. But the cosmic spirit has so invaded the Church in the course of her history, and the selfishness and self-seeking of men have so often obscured the real teaching about God and man contained in the Christian Revelation, that mere travesties of the truth are set forth as if they were the truth itself, and serious enquirers into the

principles of ethical philosophy have even been deterred from Christianity itself.

It is time that the old "Moral Governor of the Universe" theory should come to an end. This is not the Christian Gospel, which rather gives a Revelation of God Himself as an absolutely Perfect Being worthy to be loved and obeyed. The character of the Divine Being revealed by Jesus Christ perfectly corresponds with the demands of our moral reason. If it did not, Christianity could not be the final religion.

I spoke in an earlier chapter of the instinct of holiness—that instinct of awe and reverence which primitive man has for the unseen causes of things seen. That somewhat blind instinct of holiness is capable of being purified and becoming the very highest of which man is capable. Men have not a crude belief in God or gods at first, only that it may at length be taken away from them altogether, but that it may be purified. This can only come about through knowledge—the knowledge of God Himself. Can we know God? Has He revealed Himself? Can we find such a thought of Him as will perfectly satisfy the moral reason? If so, it may be that, as we use the epithet 'good' of man as well as of God, and judge the goodness of God by the ethical qualities of man, the answer to the question, What is man's Good? will be found in the knowledge of God Himself. Such I contend is the case, and the remaining chapters of this essay must be devoted to this point.

I shall devote the next chapter to a general outline of the growth of the ethical conception of holiness in the Old Testament. Then I shall treat of the teaching of Jesus Christ on the Divine Fatherhood and the Kingdom of Heaven; from this in the eighth chapter will follow a thought about God which, if true, solves the problem of the contradiction of man's carnal and spiritual natures. Whether this thought is in keeping with the New Testament theology generally will be considered in the concluding chapters of the essay.

I think it will come to be recognised that the enlightened moral reason of our day is nothing less than the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Who is all the while taking of the things of Christ and shewing them to us.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE OLD TESTAMENT NOTION OF HOLINESS.



## CHAPTER VI.

### THE OLD TESTAMENT NOTION OF HOLINESS.

As applied to things the word 'holy' (קָדוֹשׁ) is commonly used in the Old Testament to distinguish them from things called "common" or "profane," or, to use a Hebraism, "things of profanity."<sup>1</sup> Thus in 1 Samuel xxi. 5, Abimelech the priest says to David: "There is no common bread under my hand, but there is holy bread." The prophet Ezekiel writes (xxii. 26): "Her priests have done violence to my law and have profaned my holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and the common." And again in a later chapter it is said that the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok "shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the common" (xliv. 23). In Ezekiel xlviii. 13-15 a distinction is made between the land which was to be for the use of the priests, and that which was to be for common use. Of the priests' land it is said: "They shall not sell of it, neither exchange it, nor shall the first-fruits of the land be alienated, for it is holy unto the Lord." But the five thousand

<sup>1</sup> קָדוֹשׁ.

reeds in front of the five and twenty thousand appropriated to the priests "shall be for common use, for the city, for dwelling and for suburbs: and the city shall be in the midst thereof." Again in Ezekiel xlvi. 20 the wall round the temple is said to make a separation between that which was holy and that which was common.

From these instances that have been given we see that a distinction is made between what is 'holy' and what is 'common.' But there is nothing disparaging about the word 'common.' It is simply the regular epithet applied to things which are intended for ordinary use, in contradistinction to things set apart for a religious use, which are called 'holy.' The holy things are subject to certain restrictions in their use. Ground that is holy may not be trodden as ordinary ground. Thus Moses is told to take his shoes from off his feet because the place whereon he stood was "holy ground" (Exod. iii. 5). It was holy, as the context shews, because of the presence of God in the burning bush. That which had to do with God was 'holy.' A vow vowed unto the Lord was sacred, and a man so bound might not break his word. The expression used in Numbers xxx. 2 is: "He shall not make his word common" (*וְיִהְיֶה*). This of course means that his vow may not be treated as an ordinary promise and be withdrawn or broken.

This verb *וְיִהְיֶה* (to make common) is frequently used in the sense of 'profaning.' Examples of this use are Psalm lxxiv. 7, where we have: "They have set thy sanctuary on fire, they have profaned the

dwelling place of thy name even to the ground"; and Isaiah lvi. 2: "That keepeth the Sabbath from profaning it"; and Zephaniah iii. 4: "Her priests have profaned the sanctuary." Numerous other instances might be given.

But it does not seem that the verb נְבָרֵך necessarily denotes 'profaning' in our sense of the word. By 'profaning' we mean putting a thing which is meant for a religious use to a common one. Thus "profaning the Sabbath" means treating the Sabbath as an ordinary day, not setting it apart to its religious use as holy to Jehovah. Indeed our English word 'profane' is used in a depreciatory sense. But נְבָרֵך is also used in the sense of treating a thing as common and for ordinary use, when there was no profanity (in our sense of the word) in so doing. For example in Deut. xx. 6 we read: "And what man is there that hath planted a vineyard and hath not used the fruit thereof" (literally *hath not made it common*). The same expression is found in Deut. xxviii. 30. The meaning of this expression is clear from Leviticus xix. 23-25<sup>1</sup>: "And when ye shall come into the land, and shall have planted all manner of trees for food, then ye shall count the fruit thereof as their uncircumcision. Three years shall they be as uncircumcised unto you; it shall not be eaten. But in the

<sup>1</sup> It will be understood that there is nothing absurd in interpreting the words of Deut. and Jeremiah by a commandment found in the Levitical code. For even though this last be post-exilic in its form, there is no reason to suppose that its requirements were all new, and that nothing was borrowed from previous legislation.

fourth year all the fruit thereof shall be holy, for giving praise unto the Lord. And in the fifth year shall ye eat of the fruit thereof, that it may yield unto you the increase thereof."

Of course there is no "profanation" in this act of the owner of the vine in "making the fruit common." He is not treating as common what is holy, but what *once* had been holy and is now so no more. Profanity comes in when that which actually is 'holy' at the time is treated as if it were not.

The common then is, as we see, the ordinary, the secular, as we say, as distinguished from the religious, which Hebrew calls holy.

But the epithet 'holy' is not only applied to things, it is applied also to persons, and as the word can have no ethical significance when used of things, it may well be that it had no such significance when used of persons. Indeed there can be no doubt that outside Hebrew religion the epithet 'holy' was applied among the Semitic peoples to men and women in a sense far from ethical. Robertson Smith says: "While it is not easy to fix the exact idea of holiness in ancient Semitic religion, it is quite certain that it has nothing to do with morality and purity of life. Holy persons were such, not in virtue of their character but in virtue of their race, function, or mere material consecration; and at the Canaanite shrines the name of 'holy' was specially appropriated to a class of degraded wretches, devoted to the most shameful practices of a corrupt religion, whose life, apart from its connection with the sanctuary, would have

been disgraceful even from the standpoint of heathenism."<sup>1</sup>

Now the notion of holiness must have been shared by the people of Israel with other Semitic peoples before they were specially chosen out to be the recipients of the Revelation of Jehovah. It is recognised by Joshua in his appeal to the people in the twenty-fourth chapter of the book called by his name that their "fathers dwelt of old time beyond the river, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods."<sup>2</sup> Now it is not to be supposed for an instant that when Abraham was called to leave his land to go forth to another land which was not his but which God would one day give to him, every religious notion he had hitherto had was suddenly obliterated, and an entirely new conception of the divine and the human, and of the relation between them, was substituted in the place of all that he had thought before. The mind of Abraham when he came forth to obey the command of God was still imbued with the religious notions of the people from whom he had come; and the nature of the God who had called him could not become suddenly unfolded to him, nor to his son, nor to his son's son after him. God's first revelation of Himself was of His presence and of His favour. Therefore when we read the history of the patriarchs, and indeed the history of Israel generally, we must be prepared

<sup>1</sup> *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 140, 1.

<sup>2</sup> This is given by Driver as belonging to the "Elohistic" section of the Hexateuch.

to find that there were many crude notions still possessing their minds. As an illustration we might mention the incident of the meditated sacrifice of Isaac, of which something has been said in an earlier chapter.

It would greatly help our understanding of the Old Testament if we could bear in mind that God deals with men as He finds them in order to educate them to a higher knowledge and service. When the total result is seen to be an evolution of good, we cannot quarrel with the Divine method because of its gradualness. It is God's way to bring reason out of unreason, and the human out of the infra-human.

It is a matter of some importance, if we would trace the progress of religious thought in the Old Testament, to get behind its first beginnings as we find them there, and it is well to understand what were the conceptions underlying the religious practices of the Semites from whom God called Abraham.

As then we find in the Old Testament exactly the same distinction between the "common" and the "holy" which belonged to the other Semitic religions, it is simplest to understand that the notion of holiness is one belonging to them all and springing from a common original notion.

We have become so accustomed to speak of the holiness of God, meaning by this the inherent perfection of His character, that it is not easy to realise that there was a time when the epithet 'holy' did not in men's minds apply to their God or gods in themselves so much as to times, places, persons

and things in their relation to Deity. "The holiness of the gods is an expression to which it is hardly possible to attach a definite sense apart from the holiness of their physical surroundings; it shows itself in the sanctity attached to the persons, places, things, and times through which the gods and men come in contact with one another." And "the idea of holiness comes into prominence wherever the gods come into touch with men; it is not so much a thing that characterises the gods and divine things in themselves as the most general notion that governs their relations with humanity."<sup>1</sup>

And it is remarkable how even in the Old Testament holiness is rarely predicated of Jehovah Himself until we come to the teaching of the great prophets. In Moses' song of triumph, given in Exodus xv., we have (v. 11):

"Who is like unto Thee, Jehovah, among the gods ?  
Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness,  
Fearful in praises, doing wonders ?"

The term 'holiness' here need have no reference to Divine Character as we should understand the word; it would seem rather to refer to the manifestation of Jehovah's Divinity.

And it is important to bear in mind that even though שְׁמִינִי has originally no ethical meaning, but is rather a term to distinguish that to which it is applied from what is common, yet it does not mean uncommon or rare. It is always used in a religious sense. If there were no Deity, there would be nothing

<sup>1</sup> *Religion of the Semites*, p. 141.

“holy.” The word has an essentially religious application. It is Deity that makes things holy, and only in relation to Deity have they holiness. The use of the word witnesses to the fact that even in the mind of primitive man the distinctiveness of Deity is apprehended. This is in itself important.

In the words quoted above the special point insisted on is the superiority of Jehovah (not His absolute supremacy, which was not yet known) over other gods. There had been no manifestation of Divinity such as He had given His chosen people.

In Hannah’s song we have a like sentiment:<sup>1</sup> “There is none holy as Jehovah.” It was a gradual discovery to Israel that Jehovah Alone, as He revealed Himself, was worthy to be called Holy or Divine. Other so-called gods were seen to be no gods.

It is true that there is the appeal in Leviticus (xix. 2): “Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy,” where the Divine Holiness is made the ground of the nation’s holiness, but it is not necessary to consider this here, for the words occur in the group of chapters conveniently designated “The Law of Holiness,” which is not pre-exilic. They do not then disturb the position here taken up that holiness is hardly at all predicated of God in the Old Testament until the teaching of the great prophets.

If we have been in the habit of supposing that the very basis of a revelation must have been the character

<sup>1</sup> On Hannah’s Song see Driver’s *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*.

of Him who made it, and that the appeal 'Be ye holy for I am holy' is the most natural one to be made by a perfect Being in choosing a people whom He would make worthy of Himself, a very little reflection will serve to shew how impossible this is. This would be to read into the first religious conceptions of man the thought which could only be gradually evolved. How could man understand the Perfection of the Divine Being all at once?

It is not of course denied here that the ultimate purpose of revelation was the revelation of God Himself in the perfection of His Being, as One Holy. But we can see that God did not reveal Himself in His Character all at once. Such revelation as He gave to patriarchs and through Moses was not so much a revelation of Himself, as of His Presence, His Power and His working in the world. It is a matter of some importance, if we are to understand the Old Testament, to bear this in mind. In fact we may say that the earlier part of the Old Testament is characterised more by an exhibition of Divine Presence and Power, and an inculcation of human duty, than by a revelation of the nature of the Divine Being, though it must be admitted that those prepared the way for this other.

It is, I think, in the close connection that exists between the revelation God made of Himself to Israel, and the giving of the law for their obedience that we shall find ultimately the explanation of the transition of the non-ethical conception of holiness to that which is ethical.

For it must be remembered that the nucleus of the Mosaic law was distinctly what we should call *moral* as distinguished from *ceremonial*. We have as a perpetual reminder of this the words of the prophet Jeremiah: "I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices: but this thing I commanded them, saying, Hearken unto my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you" (Jer. vii. 22, 3). The table of the ten commandments is the very centre of the Mosaic code. In this are definite instructions in morality set forth as the declared will of Him who has called the nation to be holy. "If ye will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an *holy nation*" (Exod. xix. 5, 6).

This last expression is most striking, and I have not been able to learn that there is anything like it in other Semitic religions. *An holy nation*—this call to be holy implies a relationship between the people and the God who calls them. For what was "holy" might not be used except in relation to Deity. And with this call into a relationship of the nation with Jehovah is associated obedience to certain moral precepts given by Jehovah Himself. Though it might not be recognised at the time, yet it can now be seen that there is here a first step towards an ethical conception of holiness.

And let it be noticed that the appeal of the Decalogue is an appeal to the moral reason. Israel's gratitude to Jehovah is asked for on the ground of His deliverance of them from bondage. He has done them good and He asks their service in return. The first four commandments are an appeal for their service of Himself. The other commandments find their basis in that intuition of the moral reason which we have called Love or regard for the good of others. The honour to parents inculcated in the fifth commandment may be said to be based also on the intuition of the duty of gratitude.

It was the function of the prophets of Israel to interpret the holiness of Jehovah ethically. They had to teach that the holiness or relationship with Jehovah was impossible unless the moral law was observed. And the relationship is expressed in tender terms. In Hosea first do we find the terms of human relationship used to express the relation between Jehovah and Israel. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt" (Hosea xi. 1). Or again Israel is as the prophet's false wife Gomer; the nation has forsaken the Lord, committing whoredom in going after the Baalim. Jehovah invites her to return and to become faithful to Himself. "I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord" (Hosea ii. 19, 20).

Thus in Hosea we are made to feel that Jehovah is to be known by moral obedience. But we do not yet find Jehovah's holiness spoken of as expressive of His character; it is rather the distinctive title of His Godhead. "I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee" (Hosea xi. 9).

When we come to Isaiah there cannot be much doubt that in his oft-repeated expression *The Holy One of Israel* the word 'holy' is used in an ethical sense. It will be remembered that Isaiah's call dated from his vision of Jehovah, and his overwhelming sense of the Divine holiness. "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts" was the song of the seraphim one to another. And the prophet's consciousness of the Divine holiness was the consciousness also of his own uncleanness. "Woe is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

"In Hebrew idiom," says Robertson Smith,<sup>1</sup> "a man's words include his purposes on the one hand, his actions on the other, and thus impurity of lips means inconsistency of purpose and action with the standard of Divine holiness."

The whole drift of Isaiah's prophecies makes it clear that the expression *The Holy One of Israel* meant with him that there was a certain character of the Deity with which the conduct of the people must be brought into correspondence. His complaint is that the people "despised the Holy One of Israel,"

<sup>1</sup> *Prophets of Israel*, p. 231.

that they hated the moral drift of the prophet's teaching as interpreting the holiness of Jehovah, that they said: "Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us" (Isaiah xxx. 11). They would have no more of Jehovah's holiness because, when Isaiah spoke of it, he did so to censure the nation's apostasy in the matter of morality. Sacrifices were offered in abundance to Jehovah. He was "full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts." It was not apostasy from Jehovah that the prophet was rebuking, but an unreadiness to recognise what Jehovah really was. A low estimate of His person was at the root of the national sin, a contempt of His holiness. Jehovah must vindicate His character: God the Holy One shewed Himself holy in righteousness (Isaiah v. 16).

Micah had to reprove the senseless security which could say: "Is not Jehovah in the midst of us? no evil shall come upon us." He had to remind the nation that the Lord had, since His bringing of them up from Egypt, had a righteous plan for them. "He hath shewed thee, O men, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah vi. 8).

The prophets then were not content with an acknowledgment of Jehovah as the national Deity, not even as the sole national Deity, without a recognition of His true character. Jeremiah expresses the utter fallacy of a trust in Jehovah which is not based on such recognition. "Trust ye not in lying words,

saying, The temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah are these. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; if ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your own hurt, then I will cause you to dwell in this place" (Jer. vii. 4-7). We mark these words "to your own hurt." The worship of the false gods was wrong because of utter corruptness, the worship of Jehovah was faulty because they knew not Him they worshipped.

To the Jews of Jeremiah's day it seemed quite absurd that Jehovah should give them up. Was He not their Deity? How could a holy nation specially consecrated to Jehovah, Whom they duly served with their sacrifices, be deserted? So necessary then had it become that Judah should undergo a temporary captivity for the purifying of the national faith. Had the people been allowed to dwell securely in their own land they would never have understood the holiness of Jehovah. But what a change the captivity wrought! The punishment inflicted by Jehovah gave the nation, or rather its best members, time to think. And the conception of Jehovah's holiness as we have it in the Priest's Code of Leviticus and particularly in *The Law of Holiness* (Leviticus xvii.-xxvi.) is most striking. Jehovah's holiness is now made the ground of the nation's holiness. "Sanctify yourselves and be ye holy, for I am holy" (Lev. xi. 44). "Ye shall be holy

for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev. xix. 2). "I the Lord which sanctify you am holy" (Lev. xxi. 8). Jehovah is henceforth seen to be far above the gods of the heathen. He has a Character. The character of the nation which He has called His own must correspond with His Character. Hence the laws of moral and ceremonial cleanliness and uncleanness. There is no fear of Judaism now being mixed up with the worship of other gods, or with the immorality attaching to it, not if it is true to itself. We remember how it struggled for its own peculiar position under the Maccabees, nor after that does it seem ever to have shewn any tendency towards idolatry nor to have compromised itself by the admixture of the immoral practices of other religious worships.

But we cannot forget the ultimate decadence of Judaism. But the decadence of Judaism was due to its formalism rather than to its vice. The letter of the law became a substitute for its spirit. There was moreover a confusion in the Jewish mind between the ceremonial and the moral. But the Jew did not now forget that the moral law was part of the covenant with Jehovah.

We see then that the Old Testament revelation takes as its essential basis a relationship between man and God. Man is brought into connection with God. He is holy according to the primitive meaning of the term. Certain rules of holiness had to be observed. Such rules of holiness were a part of the experience

of all Semitic peoples. But in the case of Israel the rules of holiness were largely moral as distinguished from ceremonial. It was not easy for a primitive people to grasp the moral purport of their religion all at once. They soon became satisfied with the notions of the heathen around them. Sacrificial duty was thought to be a substitute for moral obedience. But Jehovah left not Himself without witness, and the breach of the moral law was found to lead to the confusion of His people. Prophets were raised up, some to declare the Divine Will in special cases, that they might guide the action of those who professed the service of Jehovah, and some to discern and make known the general principles of Jehovah's government of the people, and indeed of the whole world, which was at length seen to be His. To this latter class belonged those prophets whose writings, in the providence of God, have come down to us.

And such prophetic teaching is not confined to what we call the "prophetic books." The Psalter is pervaded by it. There we see how the direct relationship with God of the people and of individuals among the people is sought after as the satisfaction of the soul. There recognition is found of the great moral foundation of Israel's covenant with Jehovah. Take such words as those of Psalm 1. 16-23 :

16. "But unto the wicked God saith,

What hast thou to do to declare my statutes,  
And that thou hast taken my covenant in thy  
mouth ?

17. Seeing thou hatest instruction,  
And castest my words behind thee.
18. When thou sawest a thief, thou consentedst  
with him,  
And hast been partaker with adulterers.
19. Thou givest thy mouth to evil,  
And thy tongue frameth deceit.
20. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother ;  
Thou slanderest thine own mother's son.
21. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence ;  
Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an  
one as thyself :  
But I will reprove thee, and set them in order  
before thine eyes.
22. Now consider this, ye that forget God,  
Lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to  
deliver.
23. Whoso offereth the sacrifice of thanksgiving  
glorifieth me ;  
And to him that ordereth his conversation aright  
Will I shew the salvation of God."

These words speak for themselves, declaring to the end of all time, to Christians as well as to Jews, that there can be no divorce permitted by God of the moral from the ceremonial. "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear" (Ps. lxvi. 18).

We see from the Psalter how communion with Jehovah was entered into by pious individuals speaking for themselves or for their nation. We note how real such communion could be on the ground of what Jehovah was in Himself—righteous, gracious,

merciful. The religious fervour of the Psalmists is so deep, their expression of human need so true, their realisation of the Divine supply of that need so intense, that their hymns and prayers and confessions are found to express still some of the innermost thoughts of a Christian heart. But this is not the place to illustrate this point.

The review that has here been made of the notion of holiness in the Old Testament impresses upon us three chief points: (1) the pre-existence of the notion, (2) its persistence, (3) its purification.

On the first of these points a good deal has been written by those who are competent to deal with the question, and such a book as Robertson Smith's *Religion of the Semites* is invaluable to the study of it. What impresses one after reading books which deal with the crude primitive conceptions of deity and of man's relation thereto is how remarkable it is that such a notion as that of holiness should have persisted as it did, until it became transformed into the Christian conception. By the persistence of the notion I do not of course mean its stationariness. The conception changed, but it was never lost and was never intended to be lost. For there was in the notion even in its crudest form a permanent truth of human life. If the notions of primitive religion respecting the relation between man and his gods seem to us crude and revolting, that only proves their insufficiency for ourselves at the stage of development to which God has brought us. If the gods were conceived of as a

part of the material universe so that only by the aid of material things could man hold converse with them, if the rules of that converse seem to us ridiculous, we can with patience discern elements of truth in such things.

The point, as it seems to me, that we ought to lay hold of is that in spite of all that was crude in ancient worship, yet worship there was, persistent worship, because worship is a permanent instinct in man. The wonder is, not that the primitive conception of holiness was so mean, but that from so mean a conception has come forth by the operation of God's Spirit within man the great and all-important notion of Absolute Good, and of man's relation thereto.

Man's unworthy thoughts of God have proceeded from his sin and selfishness, from the fact that he is yet carnal; but that he has any thoughts of God at all proves him to be on the way to become spiritual. As carnal, man thinks that God is such an one as himself; but God is in His love and infinite wisdom giving him reproof and setting in order before his eyes, that, so far from God being what man is, man is being brought into what God Himself is.

There were undreamt of depths of meaning in that old word 'holiness' which the prophets of Israel partly saw, and which Jesus Christ has perfectly revealed.



## CHAPTER VII.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AND THE DIVINE  
FATHERHOOD.



## CHAPTER VII.

### THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AND THE DIVINE FATHERHOOD.

IN the preceding chapter something has been said about the Old Testament conception of holiness. I tried to trace in broad outline the steps by which the notion became purified.. Starting from a bare notion of having to do with deity and with but a vague idea of the nature of Godhead itself, the conception at last became clearer as it was interpreted by prophets inspired by the Divine Spirit. They saw that the essential basis of any relation of the human to the Divine must be a moral one, and that the Character of God Himself could only be interpreted ethically.

It is necessary now to pass from the old Testament to the New, in order to see how the relation of the human to the divine was set forth by Jesus Christ, and to see how His teaching and life influenced the life and thought of those who interpreted them to the world. We shall find running through the New Testament, as through the Old, the two-fold conception

of holiness as defining on the one hand relation to Deity and on the other the Character of God Himself. We shall learn, as we could not learn from the Old Testament, how God Himself can be known, and what is the hope of mankind of realising this Divine knowledge.

It would be impossible to understand Christ's teaching without bearing in mind the two most important features of it, namely, His proclamation of the *Kingdom of God* or the *Kingdom of Heaven*, and His revelation of the *Fatherhood of God*. These two points must be touched on here.

We have become so accustomed to the expression the 'Kingdom of Heaven,' that we perhaps fail to enter into the grandeur of the conception implied in it. The very simplicity of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven," may blind us to the full extent of their meaning.

There does not seem to be any real difference between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven, and I shall use the two expressions as synonymous. The phrase "The Kingdom of God" would seem to be equivalent to the Rule or Reign of God. The idea was a Jewish one; and the announcement that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand, made both by the Baptist and Christ Himself, fell on ears which already knew the sound of the words, even though those who heard them failed to gauge the fulness of their meaning.

The expectation of a kingdom which should be universal and directed from Heaven had been awakened in men's minds by the visions of prophets. Thus in Zechariah xiv. 9 we have: "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall the Lord be one, and his name one." And there was the vision of Daniel which promised the fulfilment of this Kingdom through the agency of a Son of man. "I saw in the night visions, and behold there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto the Son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Daniel vii. 13, 14<sup>1</sup>).

Now, there can be no doubt that Jesus claimed to usher in the true Kingdom of God, and Himself to be the Messiah through whose mediation the Kingdom was to be realised. That He, in spite of His refusals to be made a king, yet claimed to be a king is clear, from His own words in answer to Pilate's questioning: "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world that I should bear witness to the truth. Every one

<sup>1</sup> There are some interesting statements about the Kingdom of Heaven to be found in Edersheim's *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. i., pp. 267-8. I have no acquaintance with Rabbinic literature and therefore cannot verify Edersheim's quotations. Their accuracy and their interpretation must be left of course to experts.

that is of the truth heareth my voice.”<sup>1</sup> But that His Kingdom was of no ordinary kind is shewn by His previous words to Pilate: “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence.” To which Pilate had said in words of utter surprise and perhaps of scorn: “Art thou a king then?” (*Οὐκοῦν βασιλεὺς εἶ σύ;*).<sup>2</sup>

Nothing then could be more marked than the contrast between the claims of Jesus to be a King, and the appearance He presented to the eyes of men in general.

And that the Kingdom of the Messiah, by whose advent the Kingdom of God was to be fully manifested, was not after the kingdoms of this world was just what the disciples of Jesus found it so hard to understand. Such a request as that made for the two sons of Zebedee: “Command (*εἰπὲ*) that these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand in thy kingdom,”<sup>3</sup> shews how earthly were their notions of the Messiah’s Kingdom. We remember too how on the eve of the passion as the disciples sat at meat with Him, there arose a contention among them which of them is accounted the greatest. And He said unto them: “The kings of the Gentiles have lordship over them; and they that have authority over

<sup>1</sup> St. John xviii. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Compare with this emphasis on the personal pronoun that in Pilate’s other question: “Am *I* a Jew?” (*μήτι ἐγώ Ιουδαῖος εἰμι;*)

<sup>3</sup> St. Matt. xx. 21.

them are called benefactors (*εὐεργέται*). But ye shall not be so: but he that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is chief as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am in the midst of you as he that serveth. But ye are they that have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father appointed unto me. . .”<sup>1</sup>

The rulers of the Jews could not receive the Kingdom because they were so carnally minded. When the Pharisees asked Jesus when the Kingdom of God cometh, He answered them and said, “The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say Lo here! or There! for lo, the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you” (*ἐντός ὑμῖν*, within you), St. Luke xvii. 20, 21. The realisation of the Kingdom of God meant to them no doubt the setting up of Messiah’s Kingdom in visible splendour, shaking off the dominion of Rome, and inviting or compelling all nations to recognise the divinely appointed king. It is when we realise this that we see the force of the temptation wherewith Jesus Christ was assailed.

Whatever expectations then the Jews had of a Rule of God and of a Kingdom of the Messiah, we can see

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke xxii. 24 ff. I do not think the wealth of meaning contained in the words of verse 25 has been appreciated by commentators. I do not think that ‘benefactors’ should be written with a capital B as in the Revised Version. Benefaction or doing good is thought by the carnal mind to proceed from self-assertion, but to the spiritual mind it is seen as service. This seems to me to be the meaning of the Lord’s words.

clearly that Christ's teaching of the Kingdom and their hopes were radically opposed. Their proud boast of descent from their father Abraham seemed to them sufficient claim for a share in the Kingdom. John the Baptist had to correct such misplaced hopes: "Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our Father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (St. Matt. iii. 9). And Jesus Himself would make clear to Nicodemus the spiritual nature of the Kingdom of God when He told him in words which sorely puzzled his hearer: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born *ἄνωθεν* (anew or from above) he cannot see the Kingdom of God."<sup>1</sup> The Kingdom of God was not to come "with observation," but none the less it was very real.

The *Rule or Reign of God*. The notion is of a complete surrender of man as a subject of the Divine King. Nothing short of this is intended by the Kingdom of God—the recognition of God's right to rule and man's duty to obey. And in speaking of man's duty I mean what I have all along been calling *moral duty*, not, if I may be pardoned the expression, his prudential duty. It is not that, if he does not obey, he will be punished. But he ought (absolutely and unconditionally) to obey. But such a duty of obedience, if it is to be moral, must have its justification in the moral reason.

I do not propose here to speak of the connection between the Kingdom of God and *the Church*. We

<sup>1</sup> St. John iii. 5.

are not now speaking of the exact way in which the Kingdom was to be realised but rather of the general notion of the Kingdom of God.

We must now pass to the second great subject of Christ's teaching—the Fatherhood of God. This thought of the Divine Fatherhood is one with which we have become so familiar that it is not at all easy to go back in thought to the time when the teaching was new, as it was when Christ revealed God as Father. There had been nothing like this in the Old Testament. The prophet Hosea's simile of Israel as a son whom God had brought forth out of Egypt in love and tenderness falls very far short of our Lord's teaching of the Fatherhood of God and the sonship of men.

Bishop Westcott has said on this point: "The idea of Fatherhood in the Old Testament is determined by the conceptions of an Eastern household, and it is nowhere extended to man generally. God is the great Head of the family which looks back to Him as its Author. His 'children' owe Him absolute obedience and reverence: they are 'in His hand': and conversely He offers them wise counsel and protection. But the ruling thought throughout is that of authority and not of love. The relationship is derived from a peculiar manifestation of God's Providence to one race (Ex. iv. 22; Hosea xi. 1) and not from the original connection of man as man with God. If the nobility of sonship is to be extended to Gentiles, it is by their incorporation in the chosen family (Psalm lxxxvii.)."

"But in the gospels the idea of Sonship is spiritual

and personal. God is revealed as the Giver and Sustainer (Matt. vii. 9 ff.) of a life like His own, to those who were created in His image, after His likeness, but who have been alienated from Him (Luke xv. 11 ff.) The original capacity of man to receive God is declared, and at the same time the will of God to satisfy it. Both facts are set forth once for all in the person of Him who was both the Son of Man and the Son of God.”<sup>1</sup>

These words seem to me so exactly to express the truth of Christ’s teaching that I have ventured to quote them at length rather than use poorer words of my own. It may be questioned whether many Christian teachers of to-day have, as much as they should, entered into the depth of meaning of this truth of Divine Fatherhood, which is too often restricted to mean only the love and tender care of God for the creatures whom He has made. But that there is far more than this contained in Christ’s doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood is clear both from His own words recorded in the gospels, and from the doctrine of the Apostles preserved for us in the later books of the New Testament. With these last we are not at present concerned; it is with the words of Jesus Christ Himself we have now to do—assuming always, I may here add, that the gospels give a faithful report of what He did and taught. To enter into a critical discussion on this last point is alien to our present purpose. I may observe, however, that if we will but take the recorded words and works and see what

<sup>1</sup> See Westcott’s *Epistles of St. John*, Additional Note on i. 2.

follows from them we shall perhaps be the better able to form a judgment whether Christ really said and taught and did what is reported of Him.

Now it is to be noticed that Christ did not reveal God as the Father of sentient creatures in general as He would have done if the Fatherhood of God had meant no more than the care of God for His creation. The correlative of the Divine Fatherhood in the gospels is the Sonship of *Men*. This comes out strikingly for example in Christ's words as recorded in St. Matt. vi. 25, 26 : "Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink ; nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment ? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not of much more value than they ?" We must not fail to notice that Christ does not here say '*their* heavenly Father' but '*your* heavenly Father.' And the force of the appeal is greatly strengthened if this point be noticed. If God care for the birds, how much more will He care for His children, who are of much more value than the birds ? The same thought occurs again in St. Matthew x. 29 (|| St. Luke xii. 6, 7) : "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing ? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father<sup>1</sup> :

<sup>1</sup> I do not stop and discuss the matter, but this verse has often seemed to me to encourage the belief that the lower animals pass through death to another sphere.

but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows."

Christ then addressed Himself to man and spoke of '*your* Father.' It is not as the Creator that He would reveal God nor yet as the Creator who cares for what He has created, though such thoughts are implicit in His teaching. The truth He reveals goes infinitely beyond this. He teaches men what they had not realized before, though glimmerings of the truth had already reached them through the inspiration of the Divine Spirit on a chosen few, that man is intended to have, and in part already has, a share in the Divine nature, the Divine life. The community of nature between the Divine and the human, made intelligible to us by the Incarnation of the Divine Son, will be found to be the key to unlock the deep meaning of Christ's teaching. If for the truth of the Divine Fatherhood revealed in the Gospel, we substitute the smaller truth of the Divine love or care for the creation, we miss the very point which gives meaning to the Incarnation.

And we observe that Jesus Christ sets the Divine Father before us for our imitation as when He says: "Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust" (St. Matt. v. 44); and again "Ye therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." I think then that we must conclude that our Lord Jesus Christ

taught that man's moral life was in some way or other based on the Divine Life.

And it is the doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood which helps us to understand Christ's teaching about the 'Eternal Life.' The one cannot be understood without the other. For the Eternal Life of which Christ spoke cannot be interpreted as a mere endless prolongation of life in another sphere. It is a sharing in some sense of the Divine Life.

This Eternal Life Christ seems often to have spoken of. In St. John's Gospel in particular we find the words many times on his lips. And though the synoptists do not so frequently as St. John refer to this manner of speaking, yet we can see from their writings that the Eternal Life must have been an important subject of Christ's teaching and that it must have formed the ground of the question asked by the young man: "Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" This question and the answer our Lord gave to it are sufficiently instructive to justify a further examination of the incident.

The question asked by the young man is slightly differently given by St. Matthew and St. Mark.<sup>1</sup> According to St. Matthew the question was: "Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" According to St. Mark it was: "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" But according to both evangelists the Lord questioned the eager young man as to the meaning of the question

<sup>1</sup> See St. Matt. xix. 16 ff. St. Mark x. 17 f. Compare St. Luke xviii. 18.

he had put, but without waiting for his answer. "Why dost thou ask me about the good ? One there is who is good." These are the Lord's words as given by St. Matthew. And St. Mark has, suitably with the form in which the question was put by the young man according to this evangelist: "Why callest thou me good ? None is good save one, God."

Of course we do not know which was the actual question put by the young man. It may have been a combination of these two reports of it. He may have said: "Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life ?" It would be profitless to discuss this point. But one thing is clear. Both evangelists record how the Lord called the enquirer to an analysis of his question—This word 'good' how laxly you use it ! Its only true application is to God Himself.

We shall see in the next chapter that our Lord was here giving an answer to the question that philosophers have long sought to answer, and could not : What is the Good ? Men have sought to know what is the highest Good for man, the *summum bonum*. Christ has given an answer, as we shall presently see.

This young and eager enquirer after eternal life, then, the Lord directs to the source of all life and goodness—God. But what is he to do ? The answer is that if he would enter into Life (*εἰς τὴν ζωήν*) he must keep the commandments. But what commandments ? What is their nature (*ποιῶς*) ? Jesus said—The commandment (*τὸ*) Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt

not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother; and Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But this is just what he had all along been doing. There must be something more. What was it? “If thou wouldest be perfect ( $\tau\acute{e}\lambda\epsilon\iota\sigma\varsigma$ )—if thou wouldest reach the fulness of thy purpose and attain the Eternal Life—then go, sell that thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me. But when the young man heard the saying, he went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions.”

Now this incident is deeply instructive. For it is the Lord’s instruction in Life. The first requirement Jesus Christ teaches his enquirer is obedience to the Divine commands. These commands are in the first place general—they are the restrictions imposed upon and the requirements made of all alike. But then a further limitation must be laid upon this young man. What men call worldly goods were keeping him from the Good—God, the very fount of the eternal Life he wished to share in. “Go sell all thou hast, give to the poor, and come follow me.”

It was a tremendous demand to make, but then the young man had asked a great thing for himself. What he had asked for was nothing short of a share in the Divine Life. He wanted to attain to the highest of which he is capable. He wished to know how this Eternal Life of which Jesus spoke was to be had; what he must do to get it. The demand made upon him was great because the prize was great. The

great renunciation of self was more than he expected to be required for sharing the Divine Life.

Now this question put by the young man and our Lord's answer thereto help us to put together the two separate yet complementary truths contained in the teaching of the Kingdom of Heaven and the Divine Fatherhood. The latter of these teaches a community of nature, possible though not actually realised, between man and God, the former the absolute dependence of man on God for the realisation of that nature. Man's obedience to God is still the essential condition of learning what God is and of entering into the Divine Life.

Hence the great importance attaching to obedience in our Lord's Sermon on the Mount. It would of course be the very greatest mistake to say that Christianity is the Sermon on the Mount. The strictness of the morality imposed in that discourse (and it is very strict) must be coupled in thought with the revelation of the relation of the Human to the Divine as given by Christ Himself in the teaching of the Divine Fatherhood. Obedience to a divine rule is seen to be a necessity for understanding and sharing in the divine nature. Man is to learn God in the truth of his own moral life.

And it should be borne in mind that Christ's law as contained in the Sermon on the Mount is positive rather than negative. The old law consisted of a series of negatives, though there are positive injunctions even there, as for example in the fifth commandment: "Honour thy father and thy mother that thy

days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Yet we may say that on the whole the old law consisted largely of restrictions placed on human conduct. 'Thou shalt not' is more common than 'Thou shalt.'

On the other hand Christ prefaces His law with the beatitudes: Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are they that mourn. Blessed are the meek. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness. Blessed are the merciful. Blessed are the pure in heart. Blessed are the peacemakers. Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake. It is a certain positive temper of mind that Christ commends rather than a series of restrictions that He imposes. But at the same time while restriction is not the chief and foremost part of His teaching, He is careful to assert its absolute necessity on His followers. "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. v. 17-20.

And then He proceeds to shew the absolute bindingness of the restrictive commandments upon His disciples. And these restrictions he makes more stringent than before. "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you (and in so speaking He makes Himself a Divine Lawgiver) that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say Thou fool, shall be in danger of the Gehenna of fire."<sup>1</sup> So does the new Lawgiver brand as dangerous and deadly the sins of hatred, contempt and condemnation.

Again, the seventh commandment He makes more strict. "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that everyone that looketh on a woman in order that he may lust after her ( $\pi\rho\circ\tau\circ\acute{\epsilon}\tau\iota\theta\mu\hat{\eta}\sigma\omega\alpha\acute{\nu}\tau\iota\eta\nu$ ) hath committed adultery with her in his heart."

Once more: "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. For if ye love them that love you what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. v. 21, 22.

only, what do ye more than others ? do not even the Gentiles the same ? Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”<sup>1</sup>

These concluding words shew how much more the Sermon on the Mount is than a mere code of rules. So far as it is a code of rules at all, it is one based on the fact of a certain relationship between God and man, and a certain partly revealed character of the Father in heaven. God, who is the Father of mankind, is merciful and kind. We who are His children must be like Him. There was no such revelation of God and His character in the old law. By laws of restriction men had first to learn, and to learn gradually, the holiness of God, who now reveals Himself in holiness and love.

And it was, as we have seen, emphatically declared by our Lord Jesus Christ that He came to fulfil and not to destroy the law and the prophets. In the last chapter we saw how the old dispensation took as its starting-point an already existing notion of consecration or holiness, and attached to the conditions of its maintenance certain moral laws. These moral laws were declared to be the will of Jehovah for the people whom He had favoured by a great deliverance from Egypt, and whom He proposed to hold in a certain relationship with Himself. Israel was a “holy” nation, with a definite law to obey. Now the privilege of relationship involved in the call to be “holy” was one that would naturally be clung to; but the conditions of the continuance of the privilege were

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. v. 43-48.

irksome. It was easier to do ceremonial service, to offer sacrifice and burnt offerings to secure the divine favour. But obedience to the divine commandment in other respects was not easy, and the necessity for obedience was hardly learnt. In the last chapter we traced the gradual purification of the conception of the nation's holiness. We saw how inspired prophets had insight to see in the divine law given to Israel not an arbitrary restriction placed on the liberties of the nation, but an expression in some sense of the divine character. The relationship of the nation to Jehovah was impossible unless His commandments were obeyed, for Jehovah was Himself holy.

Now the new dispensation starts where the old left off, and not where it began. The holiness of God as meaning His character is taken for granted, but there is a further step forward when the moral life of man is seen to be not merely pleasing to God but also an entering into the life of God Himself. The moral law is declared to be not only the expression of the divine will for man, but to be also a manifestation to man of what God is in Himself. God is seen to be Love as well as Holiness.

It would be the very shallowest reading of the New Testament to say that Christ came simply to give a law of human duty of man to man; came, as we say in modern phraseology, to save society. There is no salvation for society save in the society of God. Christ declared in plain and unmistakable words that He came to give men life—life eternal. And this is

life eternal, to know the Father, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He sent.

Thus our Lord's teaching on the Kingdom of Heaven and the Divine Fatherhood is designed to present to us two complementary truths, namely, that man's moral life can only be regulated by obedience to the divine rule and guidance, while at the same time such rule is not only governance and external control, but is also the means whereby God imparts His own character to us, that we may know it ourselves, and present it before Him for the satisfaction of His infinite love.

Man is not like to horse and mule, which have no understanding. He is not in receipt of a rule for his obedience without a knowledge of its reason. He is not kept in check simply to prevent him from doing mischief. He is himself made to know the 'Good,' the end of his own being, and to become a fellow-worker with God in the fulfilment of that end.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE GOSPEL OF CREATION.



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### THE GOSPEL OF CREATION.

WE have now reached the stage when some attempt must be made to set forth the Christian answer to the question: What is the Good? What is the *summum bonum*, the ideal of human life and endeavour?

If it be indeed true that man is made in the image of God, and that he can only attain his goal in God Himself, it is clear that the answer to the great question, now more than two thousand years old, is to be found in what God Himself is. We have then to enquire whether we have any reliable knowledge about God.

Have we any means of knowing what God is? We have certainly a means of knowing what He is *not*, a means which we are ready enough to make use of when we hear unworthy thoughts put forward about Him. The ready answer of the moral reason to every unworthy presentation of what God is is this: I will not believe in any God who is not good, in the sense in which the word 'good' can be used of a good man. We must judge anything that claims to be a revelation of the divine by our sense of its moral fitness.

Now we have seen that it was Jesus Christ who brought the relation between the human and the divine into a clear light, revealing a heavenly Fatherhood, and a Sonship of men. But He claimed to do much more than this. He not only taught the relationship of the human to the divine, He claimed to be Himself both human and divine. There are some who deny this, but such denial makes it necessary either to explain away the obvious meaning of plain words, or to suppose that the words of Jesus as given in the gospels were not His words, but claims made for Him by the reverence of a later time. If we accept the gospels as giving on the whole a faithful representation of the life and words of Christ, His claims to divinity are perfectly clear. And certainly the prologue to St. John's Gospel could not have been written by one who did not hold the divinity of Christ. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." The words purport to come from one who had himself known the Incarnate Word.

Assuming as I shall here do that St. John the beloved disciple was the author of the fourth gospel, we gather that Jesus not only revealed the Divine Fatherhood but revealed also the Divine Father. "If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth ye know him and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord shew us the Father,

and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip ? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father ; how sayest thou, shew us the Father ? " (St. John xiv. 9).

Jesus Christ then puts His own life before His disciples as a proof of what He claims to be. He has been long time with them. What then, supposing Him to reveal the Father, must the Divine Father be ?

When John the Baptist from his prison, as it would seem for the confirmation of his wavering faith that Jesus was the Christ, sent to ask whether He were or not, Jesus sent the two disciples back again with the answer : " Go your way and tell John the things which ye do hear and see : the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them."<sup>1</sup> These are all works of love and mercy. And indeed the life of Jesus on earth might be summed up in the words : " He went about doing good." This must have been the impression left on the minds of the disciples that there was absolutely no self-seeking in Him, that His every thought was for others. Even Judas who betrayed Him did so because the service of His Master was not paying. He grudged his Master's self-sacrifice.

It is no exaggeration to say that the impression got from a study of the Gospel history is that Jesus had no

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. xi. 4, 5.

thought for Himself. It is true that in the garden of Gethsemane He prayed earnestly that the cup of suffering might pass from Him, that He might not drink it, but there was no faltering about the fulfilment of the divine purpose for the redemption of the world. Whatever was needful for 'doing good' that He did. In this way did He reveal the Father.

What has just been said will help to throw light on Christ's answer to the young man enquiring what he was to do to inherit eternal life. After insisting on an observance of the restrictive commandments of God. Jesus told him to go and sell all that he had and give to the poor. Why was this necessary, but because his riches were for him selfishness, self-enjoyment? To enter into the divine life, all self-seeking and selfishness must be left behind.

The essential character of God is Love. This was the conclusion come to by St. John after living with Jesus Christ, and after working for Him when the Lord was removed from earth, and after quiet meditation on the meaning of what he had seen and heard. God is Love. The apostle's life was changed by the knowledge of this truth.

And all men whose moral reason is illuminated by the Divine Spirit must conclude: God must be loving if there be any God at all, for otherwise God is not as good as good men, and a God who was not as good as the creatures He has made could not be God at all; He could not be worthy of man's worship.

God must love His creation, if He be good; and a

God that is not good is a contradiction in terms to the enlightened moral reason. In fact we can see that Christ expressed a far-reaching truth when He said: "None is good, save one, God." There is more in the words than might at first appear. Unless the Good find its perfection in Him, there is no such thing as Good, no such thing as perfection. The words have no steady meaning. We had better cease to talk of these things.

But 'God is Love' goes far beyond 'God is loving.' The latter only expresses an aspect of His activity, the former expresses His essential character.

God is Love. And yet there is the fact of sin and suffering, and of human misery, to say nothing of the pangs of the brutes and of the whole creation groaning and travailing together in pain now as for long ages past.

But what if all the misery and suffering of the world are only the birth-pangs of a great spiritual creation of love and goodness?

There has come to me a thought about God which has transfigured everything. It has illuminated for me the whole record of Revelation. It is a thought about God which is not out of touch with the thoughts of men about nature and about man himself; a thought which seems to explain the long-sealed mystery of finite will, and to unveil the mystery of sin and suffering. It is a thought about God which contains all that is true in every worthy thought that men have ever had about Him, a thought about God

which transfigures all life, a thought about God which is indeed life. It is this :

GOD IS A BEING WHOSE EVERY THOUGHT IS LOVE,  
OF WHOSE THOUGHTS NOT ONE IS FOR HIMSELF  
SAVE SO FAR AS HIMSELF IS NOT HIMSELF,  
THAT IS, SO FAR AS THERE IS A DISTINCTION OF  
PERSONS IN THE GODHEAD.

CREATION IS ONE GREAT UNSELFISH THOUGHT,  
THE BRINGING INTO BEING OF CREATURES WHO CAN  
KNOW THE HAPPINESS WHICH GOD HIMSELF KNOWS.

*God has not one selfish thought.* If this be true, and I am profoundly convinced that it is, we shall be able to find a clear and unequivocal answer to the problem, What is the highest good for man ?

That being is perfectly good who finds his own happiness entirely in promoting the good of others.

*The Good is finding one's happiness in the promotion of the Good of others.*

This will seem like defining 'Good' in terms of itself. But this is quite right. There is really no ambiguity. We have here an infinite series which is perfectly intelligible.

God is not good merely because He provides for the happiness of His creatures, but because He provides for them the same happiness He has Himself ; the happiness not of contentment merely, but of that activity which freely and purposively directs itself to promoting in others the same happiness.

We thus get in the *summum bonum* both a state of happiness and the activity of promoting happiness.

In Chapter III. I pointed out that both activity and passivity must find a place in the final answer as to what is the Good. Here we have them both.

And we may here note that if this thought about God be true we can see that conscience is indeed the voice of God in the human soul, however imperfectly the voice be heard at each stage of human development. Conscience gives men audience of the divine voice as they are able to receive it. The voice accommodates itself, in God's infinite wisdom and eternal patience, to every child of man according to the circumstances in which he finds himself. It is a revelation of God's will for that particular person, and that no arbitrary will. Indeed, the word 'arbitrary' has no meaning as applied to the Perfect Divine Being.

There is thus an element of truth in the extreme, intuitional view of ethics, which maintains that by a special faculty we know intuitively what we ought to do. This is not true, as I have tried to shew, if by it is meant that we cannot see the reason of the demand made by conscience. The reason lies in God's own unselfish being, and the end is the purging of us from all selfishness that we may become sharers of the divine life and character. But in so far as the conscience makes demands upon us, it is for the suppression of the cosmic self and the bringing out the true spiritual self.

And this conception of a Perfect Being of infinite love and self-communication is entirely in accord with the highest demands of the moral reason of

man, which to a Christian can appear as nothing short of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God.

That this illumination of the moral reason could not come to man before Christ came and lived and died, is clear when we reflect that His own life and words are the material on which the moral reason had, as we may put it, to operate.

Moreover, we can see that our day is also a “fulness of the time,” when the discoveries of science which have all taken place in Christian countries, however much many professing Christians may have disowned them, and disowned too the alliance of science with the teaching of the Church, have made it necessary that some answer of Revelation should be found to the question: What mean all these things? How is it that the “cosmic process,” which is one of self-seeking, and the moral intuitions are opposed?

May it not be that pain and suffering are the means whereby that which is natural is in process of becoming spiritual, by which I mean being made to share in the divine life of perfect and absolute love? Even the cosmic sets before us by many illustrations the beauty of altruism; but it is the altruism of constraint, and not, till it becomes spiritual, is it the altruism of willing freedom, that altruism which is called in the New Testament Love (*ἀγάπη*).

Nor, as will be seen, does this great thought of God give the least encouragement to sin, nor does it in any way deny the sinfulness of sin. It will be impossible to say: “Let us continue in sin that grace may abound.” The New Testament doctrines of justification

and sanctification are seen as they could not otherwise be seen, and the forgiveness of sin is seen to be a necessary law of the spiritual, without in any way lessening the sinfulness of sin.

That terrible bugbear of free will is removed, when we see the hand of God in every page of history; and the will is really free only when we know that we are instruments in God's hands, not of His wrath but of His Love, which would make us to share His own Life and Love.

The theory of evolution is seen in its sublime beauty, and by welcoming its truth we shall learn to understand better the lesson of Divine love. And every discovery of science will have to be brought to the elucidation of Christian truth.

And in this truth of what God is will come the reunion of Christendom, when the self-seeking and self-assertion of men shall be purged out by the discipline of God's perfect love. The instinct of gratitude, God's great gift to man and that by which man can return the divine love, will become supreme in man when he recognises, as he must come to do, the infinite benefit God is bestowing upon him; it will overpower and control all other instincts, and God will shew forth the glory of His perfection in the sons of men.

But it may be said: All this is very well if the thought is true; but is it true? Certainly it solves many very serious difficulties that men have hitherto felt weighing them down.

In the fifth chapter I tried to set forth the problem of moral philosophy to reconcile the opposition between self-love and love of others. This opposition disappears altogether in the light of this truth about God. There is really no dualism at all. 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' becomes possible of fulfilment. And 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength' becomes a necessity. Who can fail to love so perfect a Being of love and self-communication?

We have all along in Christian history been supposing that God had a purpose of love for His creation, but that there was also a further selfish purpose of so-called self-love, whereby the creation was to be made to shew forth His glory and His wisdom. But that He has not one selfish thought, this we have never seen before. But it is true. The very thought is the sign of its truth.

Some will say: Yes, *à priori* it is; but does it accord with our knowledge of the creation? What about sin and suffering? Is there no sin? I have already said that in the light of this truth of God sin becomes exceedingly sinful. It is seen in all its hideousness as never before.

According to this belief in God, the creation is one great act of love. No state then which the creature finds to be one not of happiness can be a final state. Suffering is disciplinary. Leaving aside the sufferings of the lower animals and looking only at the sufferings of man, we think of these as intended to purge out the carnal which is selfish and to substitute

the spiritual which is according to God's own character. The scene of human life is a great purgatorium of infinite love, wherein the self of the flesh is being transformed into the self of the spirit, the true self, the self that we hear speaking within us, the self which is divine, for we are all potentially children of God.

I can foresee that some will think this doctrine "dangerous." If these will reflect upon it the "danger" will vanish.

If God has it for us in store to make us like Himself with not one selfish thought but finding our perfect happiness in the good of others—and this is what the Kingdom of God means—then we must suffer, inevitably suffer, nor can we resent the suffering, until the carnal self be wholly eradicated. It is all His work. It is He that is purging us. It is He that prompts us to the acts of self-sacrifice we have to make. And the thought of His infinite love is so overpowering that our instinct of gratitude will, as already said, overpower every other. We simply must respond to His call, the invitation of His love.

It would therefore be wrong and unreasonable to say that this doctrine of God will make men careless.

Nor will it, let it be observed, take men out of the world to save their own souls. Monastic life, regarded as a means of saving the individual soul by privation, is seen not to be the means of a true salvation.

But if this thought of God be true, why have we not known it before? Because the fulness of time had

not come. The great discovery of evolution was necessary to the understanding of this truth, and without the theory of evolution this truth of God is not intelligible at all. Let us try to see how this is.

First let it be clearly stated that the doctrine of evolution is not a denial of divine working. Quite the contrary. Evolution is divine working, but it is working by a method and for an end. There is nothing godless in the doctrine. The whole cosmic process is divine. God is everywhere and in every thing.

But the cosmic process has hitherto been seen to be the direct contrary of what is called moral, and the difficulty has been to see how that which was not moral could be the work of a holy God. The explanation would seem to be this. The cosmic process is the evolution of the self. The moral process which is the preliminary to the spiritual is the discipline of the self until it becomes transformed into its true self like to God Himself in character. There is nothing immoral in the cosmic process in itself; it is simply non-moral.

Then what is sin? Sin is the resistance of the cosmic to the spiritual, the striving of the "flesh" against the spirit. It is absolutely and utterly alien to the divine character, and can only be seen to be such by those to whom God imparts the knowledge of what He Himself is. There is no sin in the cosmic until moral reason begins, then comes sin when the cosmic fails to respond to the demand of the spiritual.

But what about the Fall? On this subject I propose to say something further on in the eleventh chapter. Preconceived notions of how the story of the Fall is to be interpreted must not make us shut our eyes to fuller truth which God would make known to us. The truths made known in Revelation must all be seen in their right perspective, and the truth about God will bring into their proper places all the separate truths the Holy Scriptures contain.

According to the theory of evolution, man is evolved from a lower form of life. In so far as man was a part of the cosmic process, he was a creature of instincts uncontrolled by reason. Nor would the dawn of reason other than moral bring what we call responsibility. Responsibility only comes in when the moral reason begins, because man has then set before him some ideal of what he may become and he knows that he *ought* to become it. I do not mean by this that man attains at once to a knowledge of the *summum bonum*! That of course would be quite absurd, for men are still asking what is the highest Good. But man has some notion of a 'Good,' as human language shews; and the languages of men tell unmistakably, some more than others, of a knowledge of duty and so forth. These things are undeniable. But they are not the same in the savage as in the civilised community; and it is absurd to suppose that when moral reason began in men, it had the fulness of its more developed light. Of course it had not. But man realised gradually, by the slow growth of conscience within him, that self-restriction

and self-suppression were expected of him for the good of others. All this was the work of the Divine Spirit, and in so far as He was teaching men the sacrifice of themselves, we may say that it was the work of the Spirit of *Holiness*. But the gift of the essentially *Holy* Spirit could not come to men until Jesus Christ had set forth a life of perfect self-sacrifice and perfect love; had, that is, perfectly revealed God and the demands the divine character made upon men. This is the spiritual ideal. To man, who is a moral being, this spiritual ideal makes its appeal, and the appeal made is ever by the operation of the Holy Spirit in men's hearts. Thus the natural man has become more and more the spiritual man, but not without retrogressions and resistance.

It may be said that all the suffering that has been undergone in the process of evolution is revolting to our moral reason. But it is absurd to speak as if all the sufferings that have ever been endured could be put together as if they were one collective suffering endured by one sentient being. After all the lifetime of any one sentient being is but short, and we know not what happens at death, because we have not passed through it. But we have no reason to suppose that all that has happened in the way of suffering has not in the eternal beyond its counterpart of joy. We can see so little of the process that we are incapable of judging of the whole. We discern the divine perfection in our moral reason, and we believe that the Judge of all the earth must do right.

For ourselves, if once we can learn the truth of God's love—love without reserve and without stint—we shall welcome suffering when it comes, though we shall not invite it, as the discipline of ourselves into the truer selves, which we cannot but wish to become.

That much of the disease and suffering in the world is due to sin, is undeniable, and we do not yet know how much of what we suffer is due to our own selfishness and the selfishness of the generations that are past, who have bequeathed to us a heritage of woe as well as of partial goodness. The solidarity of mankind is a truth that science has made clear to us, and it is of no use to shut our eyes to it. It may well be that there are great discoveries yet to be made which will throw light on the problem of suffering. It may be that we shall come to see how every suffering is a corrective of some self-assertion.

God has not one selfish thought. But what has become of the Holiness of God, if God is essentially Love, self-communicating Love? The answer to this is that in the light of the great truth of what God is, Holiness and Love are seen to be one. Holiness appears as sternness to the natural, carnal man; it is seen as Perfect Love to the spiritual man. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." "God is love." "Perfect love casteth out fear." When Holiness comes to be seen by us as Love, the fear of God and the love of God will become one.

The sternness of the Old Testament revelation is explained to us when we come to understand that God

reveals Himself to men as they are able to receive Him, and that the hard thoughts men have had about God have been a reflection of their own hardness and selfishness.

I have ventured to borrow from elsewhere a phrase to sum up the contents of this chapter. "The Gospel of Creation" is meant to describe, to use Bishop Westcott's words, that the promise of the Incarnation was included in the creation of man, and that it was independent of the Fall.<sup>1</sup> In borrowing this singularly apt phrase I have not done so to make anyone responsible for the views which I have here expressed.

It has long ago been seen that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, though not discovered by reason but seen to be contained in the expressions of Revelation, is demanded by reason, and can therefore be welcomed by reason. A solitary monad it has been recognised could have neither thought nor love. Some distinction of Persons in the Godhead then is needed for the Divine Perfection.

But it does not seem to have been sufficiently realised by those who have taken hold of this thought that the relation of the Creation to the Perfect Divine Being is left unexplained. If God be Perfect and Complete in Himself why is there a creation at all? According to Pantheism God is not Perfect and Complete in Himself and creation is a necessary part of the Divine Being.

<sup>1</sup> See Bishop Westcott's Essay in his *Epistles of St. John*.

But then of course Pantheism is seen to be unsatisfactory because it makes no proper distinction between good and evil.

Now I cannot but think that this Gospel of Creation seizes what is of the truth in Pantheism and at the same time reconciles the apparent contradiction involved in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. For the truth seems to me to be that while the divine wisdom and power are manifested everywhere in the creation, the creation is not, in its becoming, a reflection of the divine *character*.

There is a sense in which it is true that "whatever is is right." But this aphorism is wholly and hopelessly false if it be taken to mean that there is no such thing as evil in the world. Nor will men ever get free from evil except by learning to call it by its proper name. Evil is the negation of the divine character in beings endowed with moral reason, and is due to the failure of moral beings to respond to the demands of the spiritual upon them. This is the permanent truth contained in the story of the Fall, about which something will be said in a later chapter.

What then according to the Gospel of Creation here set forth is the relation of the Creation to God Himself? Is the Creation necessary?

We have to be careful to understand what we mean by speaking of necessity when we are thinking of the Being or Activity of God. There is as I understand it no necessity at all with God except the necessity of His Own Infinite Perfection. God is conditioned by

nothing but by His Own Goodness. There is not a something called Holiness to which God conforms. Holiness is the divine character. To ask whether God could be different from what He is seems to me nonsensical.

The creation then, as I understand it, cannot be said to be necessary except so far as it may be a necessary expression of the Divine Perfection. And in this sense I should say that the creation is necessary. It is—and I think the thought is intelligible—a necessary expression of the Divine Love, necessary, that is, to give satisfaction to that Infinite Love.

But it must be borne in mind that the creation if regarded as a necessary thought of Divine Love, a thought not of contemplation only but of ceaseless activity, must not be interpreted as to us it seems. For we are only in the process of becoming, and can only very partially enter into the eternal thought of which it is the expression. The creation, as I understand it, is one great thought of love, the bringing into being of creatures who can know the happiness God Himself knows, who can partially enter into the Divine Perfection.

I am aware that human language fails to express the truth about God. Thus I have spoken of "the thoughts of God." But the plural word 'thoughts' suggests succession and so change, whereas the Eternal Being cannot be conceived of as changing. When I say that of God's thoughts not one is for Himself except so far as Himself is not Himself, I confess that I am using human language where it is inadequate,

but it conveys to my own mind a truth which I desire to commend to others.

What we call the thoughts of God are only parts, of our making, of one great thought. But we are lost through inability to grasp this stupendous thought. We must acknowledge, and with profound humility, the divine incomprehensibleness.

The Gospel of Creation does not, it must be acknowledged, solve the problem of the relation of this earth of ours to the other parts of the great and apparently infinite universe. But though our earth is but a speck of dust in comparison with the whole, we know well within ourselves that we have the promise of a far higher destiny than anything this earth can give us. Yet it is for the time being the scene and the means of our discipline. For my own part I believe that nothing material avails anything except as the means whereby persons made in the divine image can come to know one another, and collectively come to know Him who has made us all to be sharers in the Divine Life and Character of Holiness and Love manifested forth in Infinite Wisdom.



## CHAPTER IX.

### PAULINE THEOLOGY.



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It will be seen that the thoughts of the preceding chapter throw much light upon many points in the Pauline theology, which is the complement of the Johannine theology of love, but in no way opposed to it. The two theologies will be found to blend in perfect harmony in the light of this great truth of God.

First of all we can see how the Pauline teaching on the opposition of flesh and spirit is illuminated by the doctrine of evolution of which something was said in the last chapter. The flesh is the non-moral part of man, that part of him which belongs, if we may so say, to the "cosmic process," which is in opposition to the moral, for the "cosmic" is self-asserting, the moral self-restricting. There is nothing in the "flesh" which is in itself evil, for in the very epistle in which the contrast between flesh and spirit is specially insisted on St. Paul speaks of Jesus Christ being "born of the seed of David *according to the flesh*" (*κατὰ σύρπα*),<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Romans i. 3.

and again speaking of Israel he says of them : “ whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as *concerning the flesh* (*ἐξ ὧν ὁ χριστὸς τὸ κατὰ σάρκα*) who is over all, God blessed for ever.”<sup>1</sup>

But though Christ was God manifest in the flesh, He was not *κατὰ σάρκα*; for concerning this St. Paul writes : “ For they that are after the flesh (*κατὰ σάρκα*) do mind the things of the flesh ; but they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death ; but the mind of the spirit is life and peace : because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be : and they that are in the flesh (*ἐν σαρκὶ*) cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit (*ἐν πνεύματι*) if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin ; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”<sup>2</sup>

We see then that the *σὰρξ* in St. Paul corresponds with the *κόσμος* in St. John. “ Love not the world (*τὸν κόσμον*) neither the things that are in the world (*τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ*). If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life (*τοῦ βίου*) is not of the

<sup>1</sup> Romans ix. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Romans viii. 5-11.

Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”<sup>1</sup>

But the *κόσμος* is not in itself evil any more than the *σὰρξ* is with St. Paul. It is St. John who records the words: “God so loved the world (*τὸν κόσμον*), that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not the Son into the world (*τὸν κόσμον*) to condemn the world but that the world (*οὐ κόσμος*) through him might be saved.”<sup>2</sup>

But to return to St. Paul. It is instructive, in illustration of what has been said above on the *σὰρξ* to recall his famous “allegory” of the two covenants in Gal. iv. Here he writes: “It is written, that Abraham had two sons, one by the handmaid, and one by the freewoman. Howbeit the son by the handmaid is born after the flesh (*κατὰ σάρκα*); but the son by the freewoman is born through promise (*δι' ἐπαγγελίας*), which things contain an allegory,” which allegory he then sets forth, and then continues: “Now we brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit (*τὸν κατὰ πνεῦμα*) even so it is now.”

It will be noticed that the first time St. Paul speaks

<sup>1</sup> 1 John ii. 15-17.

<sup>2</sup> St. John iii. 16, 17. It is not worth while to discuss here whether these are the Lord’s own words or a comment by St. John himself on what the Lord had just before said. See Westcott’s *St. John*.

of Isaac as being "through promise," the second time as being "according to spirit" (*κατὰ πνεῦμα*). The point of this seems to be that Isaac was the son of his father's old age when the natural desires of the flesh—not wrong in themselves, yet self-asserting—would have abated. It was not according to fleshly desire but according to the promise of God that Isaac was conceived. Hagar and Sarah, then, or Ishmael and Isaac, taken by St. Paul to represent the two covenants, might be taken also to represent the cosmic and the spiritual.

We pass next to St. Paul's doctrine of justification and consider this also in the light of the thought of last chapter. And I think we shall see at once that it shines forth with a wondrous light. For according to the Gospel of Creation, God sees what presents itself to our eyes as the cosmic in a process of becoming spiritual as having attained its end. It is impossible for us creatures of time and space to enter into this great thought, but feebly as we can penetrate the eternal we can discern that what to us is becoming, to God is. God then sees us as we are meant to be and looks not upon our sins for judgment save so far as we are living in sin and continuing therein. When then men, seeing what God calls them to be, respond to the call and seek to become obedient to the truth of life as Christ has taught it, they are invited to see themselves as God sees them; they are justified that they may become sanctified. "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For

the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.”<sup>1</sup>

We may compare the words of St. John’s Gospel: “He that believeth on him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil. For everyone that doeth ill hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reproved. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest that they have been wrought in God.”<sup>2</sup>

“Justified” in Pauline language means ‘declared just,’ ‘forgiven,’ ‘rescued from the judgment,’ which judgment only threatens men until they become obedient to the truth of God.

Faith too, the faith by which man is justified, is in St. Paul essentially a product of the moral reason. Man sees a perfect spiritualising of human life effected by Christ Himself and believes that the same operation is possible for himself by the grace of the Holy Spirit. He enters then upon the life of

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 1-4.

<sup>2</sup> St. John iii. 18 ff.

self-renunciation, having crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts, without fear of judgment.

If it were required to define in words the difference between the theology of St. John and that of St. Paul, it might be said that, among other differences, this stands out clear: while St. John sees the essential nature of God, St. Paul discerns more particularly the divine economy. This difference can be illustrated by setting side by side with St. John's dogmatic statement "God is Light" that of St. Paul: "Seeing it is God that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."<sup>1</sup> And by St. John's words "God is Love" we set what St. Paul says: "God commendeth his own love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Characteristic of St. Paul's point of view are those fine outbursts of praise and wonderment which occur in the Epistle to the Romans: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and unto him are all things. To him be the glory for ever. Amen."<sup>2</sup> And again: "Now to him that is able to establish you according to my Gospel and the preaching

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xi. 33-36.

of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith; to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever. Amen.”<sup>1</sup>

And in keeping with these recognitions of the wisdom of the divine economy are those words of the Apostle in the Epistle to the Ephesians: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ: even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love: having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved: in whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in him unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth; in him, I say, in whom also we were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xvi. 25-27.

purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will ; to the end that we should be unto the praise of his glory, we who had before hoped in Christ ; in whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation—in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God's own possession, unto the praise of his glory.”<sup>1</sup>

With this we may compare—but the passage is too long to add to an already long quotation—the opening words of the third chapter of this same epistle, in which the manifold wisdom of God is exhibited in the unfolding purpose of the ages, the mystery of universal redemption.

It is characteristic of St. Paul’s view of the divine economy that he recognises the working of God, even where God Himself was unrecognised but unconsciously served. “Rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same: for he is a minister (*διάκονος*) of God to thee for good.”<sup>2</sup> And again: “For this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God’s service (*λειτουργοὶ γὰρ θεοῦ εἰσίν*), attending continually upon this very thing.”<sup>3</sup>

And in keeping with this is the Apostle’s view of the divine justice overruling all: “For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned under law shall be judged by

<sup>1</sup> Eph. i. 3-14.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xiii. 3, 4.

<sup>3</sup> xiii. 6.

law ; for not the hearers of a law are just before God, but the doers of a law shall be justified : for when Gentiles which have no law do by nature the things of the law, these, having no law, are a law unto themselves ; in that they shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them ; in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ.”<sup>1</sup>

But everywhere in St. Paul, though the thought of the divine economy seems more prominent than that of the divine character, yet this latter is unmistakably taken for granted, and is essential to the understanding of the other. The great divine purpose goes steadily forward to its fulfilment. And this purpose is not simply a renewed social order, though it includes this ; it is humanity, redeemed humanity, becoming a sharer in the divine life. It is humanity “according to God” (*κατὰ θεόν*). We feel all through in reading St. Paul that man’s moral life is a reflection of the Divine, and that by it man is to come to a knowledge of the Divine. His doctrine of the New Man is no mere positivist conception of a perfected humanity which can be satisfied with itself. It is humanity not by itself, but in its relation to God. “This I say therefore and testify in the Lord, that ye no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk, in the vanity of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is

<sup>1</sup> Rom. ii. 12-16,

in them, because of the hardening of their heart; who being past feeling gave themselves up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye did not so learn Christ; if so be that ye heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus; that ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, which waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit; and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, which, after God, hath been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth (*τὸν κανὸν ἀνθρωπὸν τὸν κατὰ θεὸν κτισθέντα ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας*)<sup>1</sup>

This expression “the new man who is created *κατὰ θεόν*” is a striking one. We have not in the words *κατὰ θεόν* merely an equivalent of *ὑπὸ θεοῦ*, as if God were the Author of the Creation here spoken of, true as this would be. If we compare the parallel passage in Colossians iii. 10—“Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man which is being renewed unto knowledge *after the image of him that created him*”—we cannot but be reminded of the purpose of man’s creation from the first—“God created man in his own image.”

This conception of man *κατὰ θεόν* will then assist us to understand St. Paul’s doctrine of Sanctification (*ἀγιασμός*). Man’s moral life is not obedience to rule on pain of punishment, but a sharing in the divine life; not a law, but a life.

St. Paul teaches holiness then, not morality; or rather it would be truer to say he links morality with

<sup>1</sup> Eph. iv. 17-24.

holiness, which is its interpretation. Needless to say St. Paul's conception of sanctification is emphatically ethical. Here are some exhortations of his in which the word 'sanctification' occurs three times consecutively: "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye abstain from fornication; that each one of you know how to possess himself of his own vessel in sanctification and honour, not in the passion of lust, even as the Gentiles which know not God; that no man transgress, and wrong his brother in the matter: because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as also we forewarned you and testified. For God called us not for uncleanness, but in sanctification. Therefore he that rejecteth, rejecteth not man, but God, who giveth his Holy Spirit unto you."<sup>1</sup>

It is unfortunate that the sameness of root, in the original, of the words for 'sanctification' and 'holy' in the expression 'Holy Spirit' is lost in translation. Holiness would of course not do as the rendering of *ἅγιασμός* which denotes rather the progress and advancement into a state of holiness than the final attainment of it; God has called us in a process of being hallowed. The cosmic process is to the Christian exchanged for a spiritual process.

We must not take 'Sanctification' as if it were only in antithesis with 'uncleanness' and synonymous with 'cleanness.' That would be to narrow the meaning of it, and to forget the connection, which must never be forgotten, between holiness and God himself, of which connection we are reminded here by the words: "He

<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. iv. 3-6.

that rejecteth, rejecteth not man but God, who giveth his Holy Spirit unto you." This process of hallowing is the work of the Divine Spirit Himself, bringing men into their true relationship with God, which true relationship can never be realised except by man's recognition of God's own Character as Holy. Man becomes voluntarily enslaved to God, rendering Him a willing obedience, and in so doing has his "fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life."<sup>1</sup>

St. Paul in that wonderful appreciation of his, contained in the Epistle to the Romans, of the wisdom of the divine economy, in the preparation for the gospel of Christ, dwells on the purpose served by the law. He teaches that it set before men a standard of righteousness without. Through the commandment sin was seen to be exceeding sinful. The law served to awaken the conscience which else had not known sin. To be made to know what separates from God is the first step towards establishing a relationship with Him. Therefore the Law was holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous and good.

The moral law then is the expression of the divine will, not arbitrary (for it were absurd to think of arbitrariness in such a connection) but necessary. Only by it could man be brought to know the Divine Character. In the conscience is heard not the voice of man, however consentient, but the voice of God Himself. The Law was holy. "He that rejecteth, rejecteth not man but God."

<sup>1</sup> Rom. vi. 22.

No one can say then that St. Paul's teaching is not moral, or that it could have any other result than the inculcation of a high morality; but men are made to see themselves in their true relation not only to man but to God. We revert once more to those words in the grand opening chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians which speak of God "having chosen us out for Himself in Christ before the foundation of the world ( $\pi\rho\circ\kappa\alpha\beta\circ\lambda\hat{\eta}\circ\kappa\circ\sigma\mu\circ\iota$ ), that we should be holy and without blemish before Him in love."

What a conception we have here! It may be thought that this is purely speculation, and hardly appropriate to the actual facts of life. But if it be not the truth, how did man ever attain to such a conception? It is harder to believe that this is useless speculation than it is to believe that we have here the truth of man's being as it is revealed by the teaching of the Divine Spirit.

We have in these words of St. Paul a statement of God's eternal purpose. What we now call the evolution of the universe is seen to be not purposeless or aimless. From the first ( $\pi\rho\circ\kappa\alpha\beta\circ\lambda\hat{\eta}\circ\kappa\circ\sigma\mu\circ\iota$ ) God has chosen out a people for Himself, that they should be holy and without blemish before Him. Here is redeemed humanity viewed from the Divine standpoint. Man is to be holy, consecrated to God, and he is to be without blemish, that is, a perfect and acceptable offering to a Perfect Being. The language is the language of sacrifice; the metaphor is sacrificial. The sacrifice is holy because offered to God, and the character of the victim must correspond with the character of Him to

whom it is made. There must be no blemish.<sup>1</sup> And it is God Himself who is here represented as deciding upon the fitness of the offering that is made to Him. We are to be without blemish *before Him* (*κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ*). As Bishop Lightfoot says of this: "God Himself is thus regarded as the great *μωμοσκόπος* who inspects the victims and takes cognizance of the blemishes." But while there is inherent in this conception the thought of judgment, that is not the chief thought of the passage. For if God Himself has made choice of the offering which is to be made to Him, then He Himself can purify His own offering. The thought is to encourage rather than to terrify.<sup>2</sup>

The same thought of the Divine cleansing of the offering made to Himself is prominent in another figure used by St. Paul in a later chapter of the Ephesian Epistle. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it that he might sanctify it (*ἀγιάσῃ*), having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church (*ἐνδοξον*), not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish (*ἀγία καὶ ἀμωμος*)."<sup>3</sup>

We do not stand in our relation to God as individuals merely, but as members of one body. This

<sup>1</sup> The epithet *ἀμωμος* is used in the LXX. in this sense. See Lightfoot's note on this verse in *Notes on Epistles of St. Paul*, p. 313.

<sup>2</sup> Note the mention of Adoption (*νιοθεστα*) in verse 5.

<sup>3</sup> Eph. v. 25-27.

thought will be further developed in the chapter on the Holy Catholic Church.

But while it must be acknowledged that we do not enter into the divine life alone as so many independent units, we must yet never forget the important truth that man's moral and spiritual life cannot be interpreted only in relation to his fellows, nor can we explain the conscience of the individual in relation merely to the claims upon him of the society in which he lives. Society cannot create a conscience except there be already a conscience in the individuals composing it. The moral value of man lies in his individual personality, even though it may require an environment of society to give his moral personality a field of action. Society does not make the personality or create its responsibility. As Dr. Martineau has well said: "Mere magnitude of scale carries no moral quality; nor could a whole population of devils by unanimous ballot confer righteousness upon their will and make it binding on a single Abdiel. Such as the natures are, separately taken, such will be the collective sum; no crowd of pygmies can add themselves up into a God; and self-love multiplied by self-love will only become self-love of higher power."<sup>1</sup>

There is of course an element of truth in the doctrine that the human conscience is from the society. For as Dr. Martineau says again: "If you will take 'society' to mean the affiliated multitude of consciences, the common council of responsible

<sup>1</sup> *Seat of Authority in Religion*, p. 67.

men, then it is most true that the moral authority which we acknowledge, is brought to an intense focus in our minds by the reflected light of theirs; and we should but dimly own it, did they not own it too." But the fact that society expects something of us, while it may quicken our sense of duty, does not create it.

To return to St. Paul. We may say that the thought of holiness in his writings is that of consecration, the notion of such consecration being associated with that of fitness. Man in Christ is consecrated to God; man possessed by the Holy Spirit of God enters into the mind of Christ and the spirit of His obedience. The Divine Spirit changes man and by degrees makes effectual his original consecration. Such a gradual process is suggested by the word *άγιασμός* (sanctification) which is not the same as *άγιότης* (holiness), which refers rather to the final character whereto the *άγιασμός* is directed. The actual expression, 'the Holiness of God,' does not find a place in St. Paul's writings, unless we take *τοῦ θεοῦ* in 2 Cor. i. 12 to depend both on *άγιότητι* and on *εἰλικρινίᾳ*—a dependence which is, to say the least, extremely doubtful.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, which, though not Pauline in authorship is yet Pauline in doctrine, the term holiness (*άγιότης*) is used as defining the divine character, in which Christians are called upon to share. In the twelfth chapter of the epistle the divine chastening is said to be for our profit that we

may share God's holiness (*εἰς τὸ μεταλαβεῖν τῆς ἀγιότητος αὐτοῦ*). The thought of sharing the divine character is particularly appropriate to the general tenor of the passage in which the Sonship of Christians to the divine Father is specially insisted on. To speak of men as sons of God would be, of course, extremely inappropriate, unless there were some common type of character between the Divine and Human. Perhaps this thought is not absent from the words of ii. 11: "For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one." But such a thought is not the only one, for in these words special stress is being laid on the oneness of the *human* nature of Jesus and those whom He is pleased to call His brethren.

And in the Epistle to the Hebrews as in St. Paul's own epistles, we find the notion of consecration very prominent, and the Christian consecration is regarded, as in St. Paul, in connection with the bringing to perfection.<sup>1</sup> That is to say, there is not merely consecration, but what we should call *sanctification*, which is the process of consummating the final purpose of that consecration.

And the meaning of human consecration is understood only by the offering of Jesus Christ Himself to fulfil the divine will.

" When he cometh into the world he saith,  
 Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not,  
 But a body didst thou prepare for me ;  
 In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou  
 hadst no pleasure :

<sup>1</sup> See Bishop Westcott's note on Heb. ii. 10 (*τελετωσις*).

Then said I, Lo, I am come  
 (In the roll of the book it is written of me)  
 To do thy will, O God."

Saying above, Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein (the which are offered according to the law) then hath he said, Lo, I am come to do thy will. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. In the which will (*ἐν ᾧ θελήματι*) we have been sanctified (*ἵγιασμένοι ἐσμέν*) through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."<sup>1</sup>

But there is, to say it again, no suggestion of arbitrariness in the divine will. The divine will cannot be dissociated from the divine character. It is absolutely necessary for man being relative, and having nothing that he has not received, to learn the divine character by obedience to the divine will.

Christ perfectly fulfilled the divine will and manifested the divine character under the conditions of earth. To interpret the thought contained in the words "A body didst thou prepare for me," Bishop Westcott says: "The King, the representative of men, recognises in the manifold organs of His personal power—His body—the one fitting means for rendering service to God. Through this in its fulness He can do God's will. Not by anything outside Himself, not by animals in *sacrifices*, not by the fruits of the earth in *offerings*, but by the use of His own endowments, as He is enabled to use them, He will accomplish that which God designed for Him to do."

<sup>1</sup> Heb. x. 5-10.

But as we have already seen the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews presently goes on to speak of *sharing the divine holiness*, implying that the fulfilling of the divine will as made known to man, under the conditions of his essentially relative position, was an entering into the knowledge of the divine character. And we may put this the other way and say that the knowledge of the divine character, that thought about God which I set forth in the last chapter, enables us, in a way unknown before, to take our place in the fulfilment of the divine will.

I am convinced then that the Gospel of Creation as I tried to set it forth in the preceding chapter throws a flood of light on the whole of the Pauline teaching respecting (1) Flesh and Spirit, (2) Justification and Sanctification.



## CHAPTER X.

### THE WILL.



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IN the New Testament Scriptures it is but rarely that any reference is made to the human will, but the thought of the divine will is everywhere prominent. Before then we discuss the question of "free will" it will be well to get some clear notion of what we mean by will, and this we can best do by investigating what is meant in the New Testament by God's Will (*θέλημα*).

Jesus Christ taught His disciples to pray to the Father in heaven: "Thy will be done, as in heaven so on earth (*γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς*)."<sup>1</sup> He taught them that entrance into the kingdom of heaven was not for such as said to Him, Lord, Lord, but for him "that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."<sup>2</sup> And when His mother and brethren were seeking for Him and making claims which relationship seemed to them to give them a title to, He said "Who is my mother and my brethren? And looking round on them which sat

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. vi. 10.

<sup>2</sup> St. Matt. vii. 21.

round about him he saith, Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”<sup>1</sup>

And in St. John’s gospel Jesus speaks of Himself as seeking and doing the will of Him who sent Him. “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work.”<sup>2</sup> And again: “I can of myself (*ἀπ’ εμαυτοῦ*) do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is righteous; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.”<sup>3</sup> And similarly: “I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.” And this time He discloses that will: “This is the will of him that sent me, that of all that which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life.”<sup>4</sup>

We may notice in passing that Christ speaks of His own will as distinguished from that of His Father. “I am come *not to do mine own will*.” And in the garden of Gethsemane He prayed in words, which, as reported by St. Luke, are: “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine be done.”<sup>5</sup> To this conflict of the will we must return presently when we come to speak of human will.

To return now to the divine will. St. Paul in the grand opening chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians,

<sup>1</sup> St. Mark. iii. 33 ff.

<sup>2</sup> St. John iv. 34.

<sup>3</sup> St. John v. 30.

<sup>4</sup> St. John vi. 38 ff.

<sup>5</sup> St. Luke xxii. 42.

about which something was said in the preceding chapter of this essay, three times makes mention of the will of God, using the word *θέλημα* in a different combination each time. He speaks of God "having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will (*κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ*)," and speaks too of "the mystery of his will (*τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ*) according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times," and then he speaks of "him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will (*κατὰ τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ*)."

We get from these words the notion of a great purpose of God willed by Him not in time but from all eternity, a purpose long hidden but at length disclosed (*τὸ μυστήριον*).

Again and again in the epistles we have mention of the Will of God which Christians are to fulfil, and there is one passage in 1 Peter where the divine Will is personified and made the subject of the verb to will: "It is better if the Will of God will (*εἰ θέλοι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ*) that ye suffer for well-doing, than for evil-doing."<sup>1</sup>

Now it may seem strange to begin a discussion on the human will by reference to the divine will, with which it would seem it is hardly comparable. But I believe that we shall get clearer notions by so doing.

"To will" with us is to change; it is a definite

<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter iii. 17.

activity in time differing from previous activities. But we cannot conceive of an Eternal God thus willing. This only can we lay hold of, that according to the New Testament the creation is set forth as a great will or purpose of God, having its meaning in what God Himself is, in what we have already called His Character. The Will is inseparable in thought from the Character of Him who wills.

If the Gospel of Creation be true, God's Character is absolute and perfect self-communicating Love. His Will then must perfectly correspond.

But our character is only in process of formation ; we have a certain character which is, however, liable to change, and must change if we are to make progress. Consequently our wills are not constant but liable to change.

Our characters have been partly formed for us by the cosmic process, and we have made them what they are by our response or non-response to the demands of our conscience. We are not wholly spiritual. There is still in us the self-asserting element, the carnal mind. There is a dualism in our nature. This is that of which St. Paul spoke in those classical words of his which we must here quote : " We know that the law is spiritual (*πνευματικός*) : but I am carnal (*σάρκιος*), sold under sin. For that which I work (*κατεργάζομαι*) I know not : for not what I would (*δοθέλω*) that do I practise ; but what I hate, that I do. But if what I would not, that I do, I consent unto the law that it is good (*καλός*). So now it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in

me. For I know that in me, that is in my flesh (*ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ μον*) dwelleth no good thing (*ἀγαθόν*); for to will (*τὸ θέλειν*) is present with me, but to work that which is good (*τὸ καλὸν*) is not. For the good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practise. But if what I would not that I do, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me. I find then the law that to me who would do good, evil is present. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man (*κατὰ τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον*): but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind (*τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ νοός μον*), and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of this body of death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then I myself with the mind serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”<sup>1</sup>

This is profoundly true to experience, this conflict of the cosmic with the spiritual; and the cosmic with us is not pure cosmic, for through spiritual disobedience of those from whom we have inherited ourselves as well as through our own disobedience, there is much of the law or principle of sin. There is in us original as well as actual sin. The cosmic is not sinful save when it opposes itself to the spiritual. While the cosmic is ignorant of the spiritual it is free from sin; but the law, the spiritual law, by its advent makes sin possible, and the neglect of the cosmic to respond to the demands of the spiritual is sin. On

<sup>1</sup> Romans vii. 14 ff.

the other hand the response of the cosmic to the spiritual is spiritual growth, a spiritualising of the cosmic.

The cosmic then is only sinful when it refuses to be spiritualised. Sin apart from moral reason is an impossibility. Consequently we do not speak of animals not endowed with moral reason as having sin; but every man whose moral reason is enlightened knows himself to have failed to respond to the demands of conscience, knows that he has sinned and that he has sin.

There is a distinction between these two. The one expresses a past act, the other a present state. Every action we perform influences the character for good or for evil.

The character is the man, and you cannot separate the will from the character. A man will act according to his character. Given the character and the circumstances in which the man finds himself, and his conduct is determined.

It will be said that this is determinism and not free will. If so, I must acknowledge that I am a determinist, and I think St. Paul was a determinist. But it must not be supposed that determinism is inconsistent with responsibility. I hold that every being with moral reason is responsible, that is to say, he has a potentiality of response to the demands of conscience, but not necessarily an ability to respond. St. Paul said: "The good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practise." This was his state before he found himself set free by Christ,

for it is to Him he attributes the freedom of the will, freedom, that is, to do what he saw to be good.

And this is strictly in accord with Christ's own teaching as recorded in St. John's gospel. Let a quotation be here made in proof of this.

"Jesus therefore said to those Jews which had believed him, If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and have never yet been in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin. And the bondservant abideth not in the house for ever: the son abideth for ever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."<sup>1</sup>

Christ then taught clearly that men were not free until they knew the truth; and the truth as He spoke of it, was the truth of God Himself. "This is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." And Christ said of Himself in words whose truth the whole world will come to recognise: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no one cometh unto the Father but by me."

It must be a familiar experience with us all that when we are going to act deliberately we seem to ourselves free to act in any way we choose. But afterwards when we come to reflect on what we have

<sup>1</sup> St. John viii, 31-36.

done we feel sure that we could not have acted differently. Yet we hate ourselves if we have done wrong, done that which was contrary to the prompting of our consciences. And even if we have been able to do what was right, we do not feel that credit is due to us. We are thankful to have been kept from a fall into sin. This seems to me to be the true attitude of mind for a Christian.

But that we are not responsible I could not for one moment allow. Responsibility comes from the discernment between right and wrong; knowing that we ought to do this and ought to refrain from that. Responsibility is that in us which answers back to the dictates of conscience: The law is holy, and just, and good.

Responsible but not free, this is the terrible dualism of which every moral being knows something. It is that which called forth the cry, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me out of this body of death?"

But it will be well to enquire more closely what we mean by 'character.' The divine character is that which God *is*. We cannot conceive of God *becoming*; indeed that were impious. But our human characters are what we have become, what we are now. These characters we have partly inherited, partly had made for us, and partly have made ourselves. "Every day experience," said Huxley,<sup>1</sup> "familiarises us with the facts which are grouped under the name

<sup>1</sup> *Evolution and Ethics*, p. 61.

of heredity. Every one of us bears upon him obvious marks of his parentage, perhaps of remoter relationships. More particularly, the sum of tendencies to act in a particular way, which we call 'character,' is often to be traced through a long series of progenitors and collaterals. So we may justly say that this character—this moral and intellectual essence of a man—does veritably pass over from one fleshly tabernacle to another, and does really transmigrate from generation to generation. In the new-born infant the character of the stock lies latent, and the Ego is little more than a bundle of potentialities. But, very early, these become actualities, from childhood to age they manifest themselves in dulness or brightness, weakness or strength, viciousness or uprightness; and with each feature modified by confluence with another character, if by nothing else, the character passes on to its incarnation in new bodies."

The character is the man, all that he has become; his thoughts, his instincts, his beliefs, his reason, all are a part of him and influence his conduct. His beliefs may be crude, his reason undeveloped; the character will display itself in corresponding action. The character is affected by the man's surroundings, what he sees, what he hears, what he reads, and by what he does. It is truly a complex thing this human character, but we know what it is from personal experience. To know ourselves is to know our characters. The character is not fixed, immutable. On the contrary, it is being moulded and fashioned every

day. It is partly cosmic and partly moral or spiritual; partly, that is, self-asserting and partly self-sacrificing.

It is when the character is such that conduct does not accord with the demands of the moral reason made through the conscience that we suffer from the contradiction of our nature. We are not free and we know it.

But it will be said that if the will is not free then it cannot be reasonable for governments to punish offenders. But it must be borne in mind that no government worthy of the name punishes offenders except for such offences as are seen by the offenders to be offences. At the same time it must be acknowledged that the punishment of offenders belongs rather to the cosmic process than to the ways of spiritual training. Communities protect *their own* interests by punishing those who are dangerous to them. They are in this way self-asserting, for they act more for their own interest than for the good of the offender whom they punish. This self-assertion may seem an advance on individual self-assertion, yet self-assertion it is, and, in so far as it is this, it belongs to the cosmic and not to the spiritual.

It is reasonable, I think, to hope that the day is not far distant when it will be the aim of Christian communities not to punish offenders by way of making them an example to others, that these may be deterred from like conduct, but to devise a punishment which shall be disciplinary and corrective, so that the 'good' of the community and the 'good' of the

individual shall be in no way opposed. This hope may to some seem visionary.

It is not to be denied that the Christian Church which is professedly a spiritual society has yet in her much of the cosmic, which it should be her aim to remove. The Church should be the great builder up of character by spiritual methods, and not become identified with the cosmic process. It is her function to substitute in her members the spiritual for the cosmic, or rather to spiritualise the cosmic. It is not to undo what the pure cosmic has done, namely, the building up of a self, but to teach it sacrifice, to find a higher self free from self-assertion.

It was the error of the monothelite heresy that it denied Christ's human will. A little reflection will shew that, if what has here been stated about the will as determined by the character be correct, then the human will of Jesus is perfectly intelligible. For it is essential to the true humanity of Christ that He should have developed a human character, the character depending on the fact that Christ came into what we are calling the cosmic. He was truly man, having taken human nature by being conceived in the Virgin's womb. Some have objected to the virgin birth on the ground that it is miraculous and therefore impossible, and some have thought that it was only invented as the result of false ideas on the relation of the sexes. It has been urged that there is nothing sinful in the natural conception of a child. But such reasoning is erroneous in more ways than one. Had Christ

come into the cosmic in such a way as without a miraculous conception, it is impossible to see how He could have been different from other men. He would have been only the product of the generations that were past. His perfect human life which is generally acknowledged would be unaccounted for. And indeed there would be a greater miracle to be explained than if the virgin birth be assumed.

It is most plainly set forth that Christ's human nature was pure, that He was perfectly free from the stain of sin, that He was *χωρὶς ἀμαρτίας*. The cosmic in Him was wholly free from what we may call the despiritualising of it which had come about in consequence of sin. The cosmic so long as it is non-spiritual is good, but when it is handed over to the spiritual without response on the part of the spiritual, sin is the result. The teaching of the Christian Church from the first on the human nature of Christ is that it was perfectly real and perfectly free from sin. Being real there must have been the development of a human character with all its emotions and instincts. Christ in becoming man became a moral being, with a human will and character. The cosmic in Him was never allowed to predominate over the spiritual. Self-assertion was absent from first to last. But temptation to it there was, as the gospel story plainly tells. His character, perfect at each stage, responded perfectly to the demands of the spiritual. He perfectly fulfilled the Divine Will, and learnt obedience by the things which He suffered. The agony in the garden shews that there was a temptation to assert

the human will, but that this was overcome, and He submitted to the indignities and cruelties of men and set forth a perfect example of self-sacrifice.

The human character shrank from the suffering, but the perfect love overpowered all opposition and He fulfilled the Divine Will. And we must ever remember that the love of Christ was not the love of gratitude as if He were a finite being; it was the love of God. It was exactly because He was God and not only man that His love could fulfil the Divine Will.<sup>1</sup>

Before passing on to speak of the scriptural doctrine of predestination, it will be well to summarise the chief points here insisted on with regard to the will.

First we observe that it is the possession of moral reason that gives meaning to will. We do not think of the brutes as possessed of will, nor do we attribute to them responsibility. They fulfil the law of their being by their obedience to their instincts. They do what they desire because they desire it. But with man the case is different. On account of his endowment of moral reason, he knows what is good, and has a distinction made for him between right and wrong. Some of his actions are instinctively performed, there being no opposition of reason thereto. But other actions are dictated by reason, and the motive for their fulfilment is the instinct of virtue. To say that man has will is to say that he has an endowment of

<sup>1</sup> For the perfecting of Christ's human character see Heb. v. 7-9. Note the word *τελειωθεῖς*.

reason which dictates his conduct, and that he has or can have appropriate instincts for translating the demands of reason into actual conduct. The will then is not properly free unless the instinct to do that which is good is supreme.

Will may then be regarded as purpose, and the fulfilment of purpose. In so far as it is purpose, it is purpose made possible by the demands of moral reason. In so far as the purpose finds fulfilment, it is an instinct of virtue that makes this possible.

We cannot argue that, because a man recognises that he deserves to suffer for doing what he knew to be wrong, he was therefore free to do what was right and good. Reason demands that suffering undergone as punishment should be disciplinary and not vindictive. It should be such as will purge out self-assertion and bring in a better mind.

Man's moral reason gives him the knowledge of the worth of character and shews him how far he himself falls short of it.

For my own part I hold rather that there is the possibility of the freedom of the will, than that it is actually free. We are all of us to some extent in bondage to selfishness and sin ; and this is the cause of our unhappiness.

I hold too that man cannot attain to that for which he is intended except by the freedom of his will. God is in His love rescuing us from sin, and inviting our co-operation in this.

The truth which needs to be emphasised is that of human responsibility—the truth, that is, that human

conduct is intended to proceed from the knowledge of what is good, and that what is good can be done because it is good, God enabling us to do it.

Salvation, as I understand it, is deliverance from selfishness. Nor will any man's perfection be reached until all selfishness and self-assertion is completely purged away. No man can be saved so long as he refuses to respond to the demands of conscience, nor can anyone make this response without the divine grace enabling him. It is God who makes us both to will and to do what is good.

Something must now be said about predestination. A great deal has been said and written and taught on this subject, that anything that is here set forth must necessarily seem brief and inadequate. But it is my purpose here only to say so much on the subject as will shew the consistency of the Gospel of Creation with what the Scriptures teach of predestination and election.

The classical passage on this subject is Romans ix.-xi., and there are other references of which we shall have to take account.

Now I believe that all that the Scriptures have to say about predestination and election can be understood and put together into one harmonious whole if we will but grasp the grand thought that every page of history is written by God Himself. The whole universe is under law, and that not a law apart from God, but a law expressive of the perfect divine will, never to be dissociated from infinite love.

First let it be remarked that the word “predestination” has disappeared from the Revised translation of the New Testament and that we have now, instead of the old rendering ‘predestinate’ for *προορίζειν*, the rendering ‘to foreordain.’ Nor, let it be further remarked, is there much said in Scripture of this foreordination. There are only three passages in the Pauline epistles where the word is used (in two of these it is twice used) and there is one passage in the Acts of the Apostles. The Pauline passages are:

1. “And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose (*τοῖς κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς οὐσιν*). For whom he foreknew (*προέγνω*) he also *foreordained* to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren, (*προώρισεν συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνος τοῦ νιοῦ αὐτοῦ, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν πρωτότοκον ἐν πολλοῖς ἀδελφοῖς*) and whom he *foreordained*, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” Romans viii. 28-30.
2. “But we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God *foreordained* before the worlds unto our glory (*ἥν προώρισεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων εἰς δόξαν ἡμῶν*): which none of the rulers of this world knoweth: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8.

3. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ: even as he chose us ( $\epsilon\xi\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\xi\alpha\tau\omega$ ) in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love: having *foreordained* us ( $\pi\rho\omega\rho\iota\sigma\alpha\varsigma$ ) unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace ( $\epsilon\iota\varsigma\;\epsilon\pi\alpha\iota\omega\omega\;\delta\acute{\o}\xi\eta\varsigma\;\tau\hat{\eta}\varsigma\;\chi\acute{\o}\mu\iota\tau\omega\alpha\hat{\tau}\omega\hat{\nu}$ )." Eph. i. 3-6.

And again in the eleventh verse: "In whom also we were made a heritage ( $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\lambda\eta\rho\acute{\omega}\theta\eta\mu\epsilon\nu$ ), having been *foreordained* according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will; to the end that we should be unto the praise of his glory ( $\epsilon\iota\varsigma\;\epsilon\pi\alpha\iota\omega\omega\;\delta\acute{\o}\xi\eta\varsigma\;\alpha\hat{\tau}\omega\hat{\nu}$ )."

The passage in the Acts in which foreordination is spoken of is:

"For of a truth in this city against thy holy Servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel ( $\eta\;\chi\acute{\o}\iota\sigma\;\sigma\omega\;\kappa\acute{\o}\iota\;\eta\;\beta\acute{\o}\nu\lambda\eta\acute{\o}$ ) *foreordained* to come to pass." Acts iv. 27, 28.

It is to be noticed that in the three Pauline passages there is nothing at all harsh about the thought of foreordination, but that on the contrary it is one of love unto glory. What is implied in the mention of 'glory' or 'glorifying' in all the three passages will

be considered later on. In the passage from the Acts, while there is no foreordination of any one to glory spoken of, the foreordination is not one to doom or destruction. It is a foreordination of the sufferings of Christ, who is elsewhere spoken of as "the Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world<sup>1</sup> (*ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου*)."

Nor is there in the notion of the divine purpose (*πρόθεσις*) which is described as being according to *election* (*ἐκλογῇ*) any thought anywhere of doom. If there is 'election' it is election to grace and favour, election to shew forth the divine glory and to bring into the *κόσμος* the divine character. For the *κόσμος* unspiritualised manifests the divine wisdom but not the divine character of holiness seen to be synonymous with love. That is perfectly revealed in Jesus Christ, and what we call the dispensation of the Holy Spirit has for its end the forming of Christ in the sons of men, in a great world-wide society—the Church of the living God, the Body of Christ. To this subject a separate chapter must be devoted.

But we must now turn our attention to what seem the sterner aspects of God's ways. The purpose of God according to election, exemplified in the preference of the younger son Jacob to the elder Esau, suggests the question which St. Paul asks, in order to answer it: "Is there then unrighteousness with God?" God forbid. (Dismiss the thought and try to understand the divine ways of infinite love and wisdom.) "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xiii. 8.

on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that hath mercy ( $\tauοῦ \epsilon\lambda\epsilon\omega\eta\tauο\ς \theta\epsilon\o\ν$ ). For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, For this very purpose did I raise thee up, that I might shew in thee my power, and that my name might be published abroad in all the earth. So then he hath mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth ( $\ddot{\alpha}\rho\alpha \o\ddot{\nu}\ \ddot{\delta}\nu \theta\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota \epsilon\lambda\epsilon\epsilon\iota, \ddot{\delta}\nu \ddot{\delta}\epsilon \theta\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota \sigma\kappa\lambda\eta\eta\mu\acute{\nu}\iota\epsilon\iota$ ).<sup>1</sup>

This seems a hard saying, but its apparent hardness arises from man's inability to get hold of the right notion of the divine will, the exercise of which is set forth in the word  $\theta\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota$ . There is nothing arbitrary in the divine will. All is according to law, having its root in the divine character of infinite love and holiness. I fear I repeat myself. But this seems to me to be the key to the whole mystery.

We are too ready to say, reading our own arbitrariness into revelations of the divine will: "Why doth he still find fault? For who withstandeth his will?" "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why didst thou make me thus? Or hath not the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one part a vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour? What if God willing ( $\theta\epsilon\lambda\omega\ν$ ) to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction: and that he might make known the riches

<sup>1</sup> Rom. ix, 15-18.

of his glory upon vessels of mercy, which he afore prepared unto glory [we note the continued references to 'glory'] even us, whom he also called, not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles."

But it will be said that we cannot help asking, Why has God made us thus? God has put into our hearts a sense of "justice," which we cannot eradicate, nor would we wish to. But is not the difficulty removed when we remember that the *κόσμος* is the work of God's wisdom and that out of it, according to His laws and patient working, the Divine Spirit is bringing forth the divine glory?

We have seen how frequently this word 'glory' occurs in the passages that have been quoted. What is intended by it? We have got into the way of speaking of doing things "to the glory of God," which is I suppose an equivalent expression for a recognition on our part of the Divine Perfection and of the demands it makes upon us. I take it that this is what is meant by glorifying God. The "glory of God" in Scripture is the display of God Himself; at one time it was conceived of as manifested in bright light, but this notion is primitive, and God's use of the notion in the early training of Israel was, as we can see, a condescension to the imperfect ideas of the time. If we want to understand the New Testament notion of 'glory' we must lay hold of what St. John meant when in the introduction to his gospel he wrote: "And the word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father full of grace and truth." The divine

glory is the glory of character, that perfect character of holiness and love, the character of Him who has not one thought for Himself.

There is not so far as I can see any trace in the New Testament of the idea that the creation exists for God's pleasure. The words of the song of the twenty elders in Rev. iv. which are in the Authorised Version rendered "Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created," are thus made not to give their true meaning. The word here translated 'pleasure' is *θέλημα*, and the song should run as in the Revised Version: "Worthy art thou our Lord and our God to receive the glory and the honour and the power: for thou didst create all things, and *because of thy will* they are and were created." God's will is one of absolute love according to His character; so St. Paul in Eph. i. 5 speaks, as we have seen, of the "good pleasure of his will (*τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ*)."  
"Fear not, little flock," said Christ to His little band of disciples, "it is your Father's good pleasure (*εὐδόκησεν*) to give you the kingdom." The good pleasure of God's will is to impart Himself, His glory, His character.

What has here been said will help us to understand the appropriateness of St. Paul's mention of 'glorifying' in Romans viii. 30: "Whom he foreordained, them he also called: and whom he called them he also justified (*ἐδικαίωσεν*): and whom he justified them he also glorified (*ἐδόξισεν*)."  
Foreordained, called, justified, glorified; we have here an orderly sequence of thought—the great purpose from all eternity, the

manner of its fulfilment in time, the end of it—the manifestation of the divine life in and before the sons of men. From the first God sees men, if we may say so, as having become what His will is that they should be; when then He calls them, He justifies them, does not impute sin to them, forgives them. It has been said that nature knows no forgiveness. It is the miracle, the elementary principle of grace.

But the 'forgiveness of sins' can have no proper meaning at all unless it includes a *getting free from*, an abandonment of sin, the entire renewal of the cosmic until it becomes in Scripture language "a new creation" (*καὶ νῆ κτίσις*).<sup>1</sup>

So long as 'being glorified' is looked upon as a being received into the divine presence, without regard being had to the character of that presence, so long will wrong notions of getting to heaven by escaping hell find a place in men's minds. These notions are radically wrong; they are of the cosmic and not of the spiritual. That the fear of hell has had an important part to play in the divine economy for educating men out of the cosmic state, need not be denied. But there is need to-day, in order to satisfy the demands of educated moral reason, of a higher and nobler view of the destiny of creation. Unless the faith of Christ can meet that demand, men will say, and say truly, that it has done good things in the past, but that it is now played out.

Played out! We are only now beginning to enter

<sup>1</sup> Gal. vi. 15.

into the grandeur of creation and its glorious destiny ; and I believe that we shall come to see that the whole cosmic process is one vast purgatory of infinite love, by which out of the selfish and self-asserting God is bringing out a glorious display of Himself and His character in men.

“ The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so but ourselves also which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body.”<sup>1</sup>

Such was St. Paul’s hope, and in a fuller sense it may be ours too ; and ours too may be and indeed must be, if these things are true, those words of the same Apostle : “ O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out ! For who hath known the mind of the Lord ? or who hath been his counsellor ? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again ? For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things. To him be the glory for ever. Amen.”<sup>2</sup>

What is needed to-day is the union of the Johannine conception of the essential character of God with the Pauline notion of the grandeur of the divine economy. Let these be interpreted by the now proved theory of evolution, which science has revealed to us, and we have a Gospel to change the world.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 22, 23.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xi. 33-36.

It is St. Paul who said that God *willeth* ( $\thetaέλει$ ) *all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*. The truth must be a saving truth, with power to bring men out of themselves. Such power the truth of God has.

## CHAPTER XI.

THE FALL AND THE ATONEMENT.



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### THE FALL AND THE ATONEMENT.

It may seem to some readers that the Gospel of Creation as here set forth tends to make sin seem excusable; that it appears, if we may so speak, to lay the responsibility for it no longer upon man but upon his Maker. While I can understand that this objection may be made, I do not think it will long justify itself to the reason.

I propose then first of all in this chapter to say something of the story of the Fall as we have it in the book of Genesis, and to examine how far this Gospel of Creation, which seems to me true, requires us to modify our interpretation of that story.

I may say then at once that I do not regard the story of the Fall as literally true, and indeed there are many others who do not so regard it; but its spiritual significance seems to me not one whit diminished by anything that has been said in the course of this essay.

For when we come to examine the underlying spiritual truth of the story we shall find, I think, that what is eternally true in it is this, that evil is the

negation of what God Himself is, and that it could only have come about by a failure in obedience to the divine will. It was important from the first, for the spiritual discipline of man, that he should be made clearly to understand that sin was hateful to God, that so long as he had sin he was alienated from God and the divine life.

The story of the Fall is one not peculiar to the Israelites.<sup>1</sup> What is peculiar is the particular spiritual teaching which it is made to have. This is, as I say, unalterable.

But it will seem that, according to the view which I am advocating of the evolution of man, there can have been no Eden at all, and so it seems as if the whole story is given up. Let me then explain how this may be understood.

The story of the creation of man is, as I take it, ideal. Man is set forth as in the eternal purpose he is meant to become. Eden is his goal and not his starting-point, save in ideal. That which excludes man from Eden is sin, and there is need of a great discipline that this may be removed and the ideal reached. This seems to me a perfectly simple and obvious interpretation of the story, and that it has not been given before is nothing against it, for, as I say, the spiritual truth underlying the story remains exactly the same, that evil is the negation of what God is, and that it results from failure to obey the divine will.

<sup>1</sup> See Ryle's *Early Narratives of Genesis*. Also Hasting's *Dictionary of the Bible* under *The Fall*.

It will be noticed that the interpretation of the story of the Fall which I am proposing does not make it appear in any way as if the disobedience of man were something unexpected or unforeseen in the divine counsels. The interpretation usually given has, however, this difficulty, from which it can never get free. You cannot make evil any less a mystery by shifting back the responsibility to some other finite will, which preceded the human will in disobedience of the divine commands. The serpent creeping upon the ground may just as well stand for the lower human nature as for a personal tempter of evil.

It is remarkable indeed that nowhere in Christ's teaching is there any mention of the Fall. There was, however, one occasion when He referred to the early chapters of Genesis in defence of the sanctity of marriage and its indissolubleness. "There came unto him Pharisees, tempting him, and saying, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said, Have ye not read, that he which made them from the beginning made them male and female and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh. So that they are no more twain but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives:

but from the beginning it hath not been so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery.”<sup>1</sup>

We thus see that Jesus Christ claimed that the sanctity of married life and the indissolubleness of the marriage tie were part of the counsels of God in creation. The restraint involved in monogamy is just one of those disciplines by which man is taught to purify himself from the selfishness of his cosmic nature, and to enter into a spiritual relationship of ready self-sacrifice. We may recall St. Paul’s words: “Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife loveth himself: for no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the church; because we are members of his body. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I speak in regard of Christ and of the church.”<sup>2</sup>

But to return to the bearing of the New Testament on the story of the Fall. I do not see that anything that is essential to the spiritual truths set forth by St. Paul is impaired by the interpretation which I am advocating. It is true that St. Paul says: “As through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. xix. 3-9.

<sup>2</sup> Ephesians v. 28-32.

one shall the many be made righteous.”<sup>1</sup> He says also: “As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.”<sup>2</sup> The analogy in detail may cease to hold if there be no single Adam from whom we are all descended, but the great truth of Christ’s redemption from sin wrought for mankind, and of the promise of our resurrection remains just where it was. The old Adam is as sinful as ever he was and as mortal.

But here we come to the most difficult point of all, namely, the connection of death with sin. According to the narrative of Genesis it was man’s disobedience that brought death, if not into the world, at any rate upon himself. “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”<sup>3</sup> And St. Paul so interprets Genesis when he says that “through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin.”<sup>4</sup>

The question is, therefore, sometimes put: Would man have been immortal if he had not sinned? But the question seems to me useless. It is simply misleading to talk of ‘ifs’ when you are trying to understand the ways of God. What is true, and true to the end of time, is this, that the sting of death is sin, and that it was man’s inability to get free from sin that made death a necessity for him. You cannot read the gospels without reading Christ’s claim to be in no way subject to death. “Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but I lay

<sup>1</sup> Romans v. 19.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Gen. ii. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Romans v. 12.

it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment received I from my Father."<sup>1</sup> It has long seemed to me that the historical event of the transfiguration was, if we may so say, the outward evidence of Christ's right to pass into the spiritual body without death. But He snatched himself away from the premature glory and talked of His decease (*ἔξοδος*) which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

Man then ideally is not subject to death, but death reigns because of the transgression, because man is of the cosmic and only partly spiritual. "There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." Jesus Christ voluntarily passed through death and assumed His spiritual body out of His uncorrupted body of humiliation. We have no such power. Yet death to the Christian has lost its terrors, and we have a prophecy of a future which may be nearer than we imagine: "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."

This St. Paul set forth as a mystery, that is, as something which had been revealed to him. It seems to me to be of great importance to see quite clearly that there is a difference between this unveiling of the future and St. Paul's use of the story of Adam, which was common property. I know it may be said that if you give up St. Paul's teaching in one respect you must give it up all round; you have not in him an authority to be relied upon. But this seems to me to be an entire misunderstanding of the purpose of

<sup>1</sup> St. John x. 17, 18.

revelation, which is to make known to us the things we need to know and could not otherwise know, and not to tell us what we can otherwise discover for ourselves.

The Bible must be continually reinterpreted in the light of all truth that God gives us through whatever source it comes.

I do not then think it necessary to believe that the whole human race is descended from a single pair, nor is it necessary to regard the story of Eden as anything more than ideal. What is necessary, for it is for ever true, is to recognise and hold to the great truth that evil is the negation of divine character in moral beings, that it is due to man's disobedience, and can only be remedied by God Himself. This brings us to the doctrine of the Atonement.

Why did God become man? The answer to this question, according to the Gospel of Creation as I understand it, would be that God came into the *κόσμος* to spiritualise it, to impart His own life and character to it. When Christ came the whole world was lying in the wicked one (*ὁ κόσμος ὅλος ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται*).<sup>1</sup> And if my thought about God be true, and the evolution of creation be, as it seems to me, a fact, those two aspects of Christ's work for mankind which are conveniently summed up in the words *Christus Salvator* (or *Redemptor*) and *Christus Consummator* become one. The end of the creation is attained by the removal of all self-will and self-assertion. What

<sup>1</sup> 1 John v. 19.

man was in the counsels of God in creation, that in Christ Jesus he became.

What we call the Atonement might be equally well called the Reconciliation. It is the reconciliation of man to God, not, properly speaking, of God to man. St. Paul sets forth the message of his "ministry of reconciliation" in these words: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses."<sup>1</sup> And the Apostle appeals as an ambassador on behalf of Christ as though the entreaty came from God Himself: "Be ye reconciled to God."

There is of course a view of the Atonement which represents it as the appeasing of the wrath of God. Nor is it to be denied that the New Testament tells of the divine wrath as well as of the divine love. But it must be remembered that wrath and love are not contradictories, as are hatred and love. You cannot separate the thought of the wrath of God from the thought of His love, which is His essential character. It is true that we are until reconciled to God in Christ "children of wrath," because we are still in the bondage of sin. The manifestation of God's wrath, which is very terrible and needs must be to those who love Him not, is in Scripture the evidence of the divine displeasure at sin. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold down the truth in unrighteousness."<sup>2</sup>

When St. Paul speaks, as he does in Romans ix. 22,

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. v. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. i. 18.

of God being “willing ( $\theta\acute{e}\lambda\omega\nu$ ) to shew his wrath,” we must of course understand this word  $\theta\acute{e}\lambda\omega\nu$  as explained in the preceding chapter. It was there insisted on that there can be nothing arbitrary in the divine will, which can in no way be conceived of as changeable. God’s purpose for man must accord with His own character, and if a manifestation of evil and a punishment of evil is a part of His design for the bringing about of an ultimate good, we cannot gainsay it. We are invited to discern the divine hand in all the movements of nature and history, but in no way can we make God accountable for evil as if it were a part of His character. Evil brings always a retribution of punishment, and thus the divine character is displayed.

God’s wrath then must descend on the evil-doer unless the sin be forsaken. Then whatever chastening is endured is seen to be for the purging out of selfishness and the bringing in of the “new creation.”

“Be ye angry, and sin not” is a necessary injunction to sinful man. Anger with us is too often vindictiveness and the result of wounded pride, but it is not easy for us to discern what is meant by the anger of Him who has not one selfish thought.

I do not wish for one moment to shut my own eyes or the eyes of others to the great truth which is preserved in the necessary expression, “the anger or wrath of God.” This records for us the fact that sin must carry with it alienation from God and the eternal life which is in Him, and that there can be no forgiveness of sin, so long as it is excused and not called by its right name.

But the essence of the forgiveness of sin must be the removal of the sin. This need not mean the immediate removal of its penal consequences. These may be still necessary for the real purging out of the old self. But the forgiveness of sins, unless it means the removal of sins, the bringing in of the true self in place of the cosmic self, is simply a mockery.

It would then be a quite misleading view to take of the Atonement to say that because of Christ's perfect obedience to the divine will God had forgiven men their sins, unless such forgiveness carried with it the removal of sin. Say the forgiveness of sins means the removal of the consequences of sins, yet surely among the consequences of sin is sin itself. It is not the removal of consequences, but the removal of sin itself, the entire renewal of the self, the bringing in of the new man in place of the old. Nothing is of any avail but a new creation (*καυνὴ κτίσις*).

An atonement which was wholly external to ourselves would not be a reconciliation for us. It would not bridge over the gulf between ourselves and God, for Whom we were made. On the other hand it is quite clear that we could never reconcile ourselves to God, for we cannot recreate ourselves. Some life must be imparted to us from without, and we must know the law by which it is imparted, in order that we may have it.

I take it then that the requisites for an atonement, for a reconciliation of man to God, are two: (1) Knowledge, including the knowledge of forgiveness, and (2) Life.

First we think of knowledge as a *sine qua non* of an atonement. You cannot read the New Testament, nor indeed the Bible generally, without observing how much importance is attached to knowledge, the knowledge of God. There can be no possible agreement between two parties who have no knowledge each of the other. Now we cannot, of course, impart to God any knowledge of ourselves seeing that we are entirely relative to Him; but He must, if we are to know Him, give us the knowledge of Himself and of our relation to Him.

And clearly the knowledge men have of God must depend on the state in which they are. You cannot impart to a child the knowledge of a full-grown man. And we have to recognise that there is such a thing as a period of childhood of the human race. The education in the knowledge of God then has been, and, by the divine law, must have been, gradual. In the Old Testament we see men coming to a knowledge of God, and God, step by step, revealing Himself, not in word only, but by the events of home life, of tribal life, of national life. Inspired prophets interpreted some of these things according as the Spirit of God gave them the insight into their interpretation. The notion of holiness, by which term we have at length been taught to understand the absolute perfection of divine character, was at first vague and undefined. Men had to feel their way to its meaning. But God gave men the word and gradually made known to them its meaning. This is true of many words and notions, true of 'sacrifice' as it is of 'holiness.'

While from an early stage men seem to have understood that anything offered in sacrifice must be perfect of its kind, they could not see, until Christ made it clear, that the only sufficient sacrifice must perfectly correspond with the divine character. It must be the sacrifice of man himself perfectly identified with the divine will, which, as we have seen, is inseparable in thought from the divine character.

Our word 'sacrifice' comes at last to have its proper meaning, the making of something holy, holiness being interpreted as what God is, and the something made holy being something which has potentially, if not actually, the divine nature. The sacrifice must be the sacrifice, the making holy, of man himself. There is a fund of meaning in those words of Jesus Christ: "For their sakes I sanctify myself." Christ made of Himself an offering of perfect obedience and self-sacrifice to give men knowledge of the true meaning and end of sacrifice, to make men know God, and also to impart to them the life of God.

But just now we are thinking more of the knowledge than of the life. Knowledge is a necessity to life. "This is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." "No one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth (*βούληται*) to reveal him."<sup>1</sup> Our knowledge of God then must come from the knowledge of Christ Himself—what He taught and what He was. It is

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. xi. 27.

through Him we have "received the reconciliation" (Romans v. 11). He has perfectly revealed the Father and is Himself the Way to Him.

In Jesus Christ then we have an entire absence of the cosmic spirit of self-assertion, against which spirit He was a living protest. Conceived in the womb independently of all self-assertion and self-seeking of man, not after the will of man (*ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς*) but of God, He came into the *κόσμος* which He had prepared for Himself to change its spirit, to renew it, to make men sons of God actually and not only potentially.

The spirit of the world was of course opposed to Him. Where there was humility of mind there the gracious teaching found a response, but the cosmic self-asserting governments of Israel and of Rome agreed in condemning Him. Self-seeking in one of His own chosen band of twelve led to His betrayal. Confession of His claims to be both Son of God and King of men was not withheld by Him before High Priest and Roman Governor, confessions both of them which brought to Him no manner of gain to Himself, for His life might have been spared by the denial of both. It was the cosmic spirit that brought about His death. Verily He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. There was more in that death than we can ever understand. It is better to bow the head when we hear that cry: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me."

But that death, real to Him, and, as I believe, precious beyond words to us, did not mean corruption.

He rose again, bringing the spiritual body forth from the grave where His natural uncorrupted body lay.

In Jesus Christ the cosmic process attained its true goal. He changed the natural into the spiritual in spite of all the opposition of the spirit of the world. The Resurrection was a great evidence of the divine forgiveness of sin. The sins of the world wrought that death, but death could not hold Him. "He was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead."<sup>1</sup>

But did Christ rise? First we say that moral reason demands the resurrection. That is to say, whatever doubt there may be of it on the ground of the antecedent improbability of a miracle, such as Hume speaks of, is removed, and there becomes an antecedent probability in its favour. The moral reason demands the Resurrection, and faith, which is a product of the moral reason, or, at any rate, an accompaniment of it, welcomes it as true, when properly evidenced.

Nor is the evidence we have of the resurrection of Christ confined to the testimony of those who had seen Him after He was risen as recorded in the gospels. Such evidence would be insufficient at this long distance of time to establish so momentous an event. The evidence of the eye-witnesses of the risen Christ is supplemented for us by the history of the Christian centuries which, with all their miserable

<sup>1</sup> Rom. i. 4.

failures to enter into the mind of Christ, have yet given proof that there is a new life in the sons of men. We are so accustomed to much of it, that we perhaps hardly notice it, nor realise what we owe to it; but if we could only trust it more, and acknowledge the truth of what God is, what power would be manifested in the world to-day! Yes, and it will come if we can only see more than we have done the real meaning of sin, and understand God's Holiness as perfect Love.

To the Christian the resurrection of Jesus Christ can never be dissociated from the Ascension into heaven, nor this again from the Session at the right hand of God to make intercession for us. Figures of speech all these, but all expressive of grand realities. Work finished is intended by the Session, work ever continued is intended by the intercession. The death and resurrection of Christ were not for Himself; their fruits are for the world. The great intercession cannot be dissociated from the coming of the Holy Ghost. If Christ is the *παράκλητος* in heaven, the Holy Spirit is the *παράκλητος* in the hearts of men. (1 John ii. 1, John xiv. 26.)

And what Christ foretold has come to pass, that the Holy Spirit would lead men into the truth; that He would take of Christ's and shew it unto men. And is there not some message that the same Spirit has to make known to our day to interpret to us as God's truth the things which through patient working men have discovered in science? These things too are to be spiritualised and purged of all cosmic dross,

if we will only hear what God has to tell us of them in the Gospel of His Son.

But of course if men hold that the Christian Gospel has done its work, and is a thing of the past; if they will not see that still, in spite of all progress, the sublime figure of Jesus of Nazareth stands supreme in history, they are not likely to turn to Him for the inspiration which the work of the world sorely needs.

It is the unification of all knowledge that is so much wanted now; the reconciliation of all oppositions, a great atonement of all things in heaven and earth. Cannot the great truth of what God Himself is help to bring us this? For my own part I am convinced it can and will.

But we need not only a harmony of knowledge; we must find also a harmony of life. Life as we know it in the cosmic sphere is discord. But it just makes all the difference to our view of it and the use we make of it, whether we regard the discord as a final necessity of life, a law of life itself, or as the tuning into perfect harmony of the various instruments of God's will. I believe this last to be the right view.

“He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son hath not the life.”<sup>1</sup> If we will but reflect we shall find that all that is truest and best in us (and it is but little) has come to us through Jesus Christ, the inspiration of His life and death, and it has come to us, far more than we know perhaps, from His indwelling in us by His Spirit.

<sup>1</sup> 1 John v. 12.

We may have cut ourselves off from outward communion with the Christian Church: we may have found its doctrine unsatisfying and sometimes revolting to our moral reason. But still the Christ stands forth, and we still have to own that never man spake, or lived or died as did He. If He has any answer to give to the questions raised by the scientific discoveries of these later days, at least it will be sympathetic and not afraid of the truth. The Christian Church has made some bad mistakes, as from her imperfect nature was inevitable, but the danger for our own day is lest she should stereotype the living oracles of God instead of bringing them to the interpretation of the ever-unfolding truth of God.

There has been much done of late years to put the New Testament on a sure footing. Criticism has fearlessly tested the books, and has given them back to us, almost all of them, and said that they were what we thought them to be, genuine productions of the Apostolic age. This is an immense gain. Next, criticism has taken in hand the books of the Old Testament, and the result of her enquiry is that these are *not* all that we took them to be, and we are called upon to modify the traditional views. But what criticism is teaching us about the Old Testament is just what science, free and independent and fearless of results, has taught us already of the world—the great truth of evolution, slow development and patient progress. Shall we be taught these things or shall we know better than the truth itself? This is really, as it seems to me, the question that the Church has to face.

She may say, and it is right for her to say, that she cannot give up the eternal truths which have been the salvation of the world. There is no fear that the great doctrine of the Atonement will ever lose its authority, but false and unworthy views of it will.

The knowledge of what God Himself is is after all the first want of men. When we get lost in the mazes of the divine economy, with no clear light whence things have come or whither they go, we lack the key to the mysteries of the universe. But if we can get hold of a living formula of God Himself we can perhaps interpret imperfectly but yet not fruitlessly, the ways of His working.

And so with this great Christian doctrine of the Atonement. We want not only a reconciliation of ourselves with God, an interpretation of our own nature which shall explain and partially remove its discords; we want further such an interpretation of the eternal Gospel as shall give us what we may call the divine view of the universe.

CHAPTER XII.

THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.



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### THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.

I HAVE tried to bring out in the course of this essay the positive notion of 'holiness.' The root meaning of the Hebrew **שְׁרֵד** is generally thought to be 'separateness,' that which was holy being that which was separated off from what was common. At a very early period, however, the word must have acquired its own special meaning, its application being restricted to Deity and what had to do with Deity. It is therefore useless to attempt to interpret the use of the word 'holy' by reverting to the original meaning of the word which was used to express it. Holiness is something *sui generis*, and to think of the 'holy' as that which is separate without taking into account the rationale of the separateness, would be utterly misleading. The notion of 'holiness' has been a progressive one. It ultimately defines the character of God; the notion, that is, becomes strictly ethical, and I have tried in this essay to give greater definiteness than seems to have been given before to the notion of divine holiness.

When then we wish to get hold of the Christian doctrine of the Holy Catholic Church, we must not revert to the root meaning of **שְׁתִּיר**, as some have done, and say that the 'holiness' of the church connotes its separateness from the world, however true such an idea might be. The Church is holy because it partakes of the divine character, or because such is its ideal. It must be remembered that in the Creed there is a close connection between the words, "I believe in the Holy Ghost," and the immediately following words, "the Holy Catholic Church," with which is conjoined "the Communion of Saints (or holy ones)."

Nor again must we fall into an at one time common mistake of giving an almost negative meaning to the word 'church.' "There is no foundation," says Hort, "for the widely-spread notion that *ἐκκλησία* means a people or a number of individual men *called out* of the world or mankind. In itself the idea is of course entirely scriptural, and moreover it is associated with the word and idea 'called,' 'calling,' 'call.' But the compound verb *ἐκκαλέω* is never so used, and *ἐκκλησία* never occurs in a context which suggests this supposed sense to have been present to the writer's mind. Again, it would not have been unnatural if this sense of *calling out* from a larger body had been as it were put into the word in later times, when it had acquired religious associations. But as a matter of fact we do not find that it was so. The original *calling out* is simply the calling of the citizens of a Greek town out of their houses by the

herald's trumpet to summon them to the assembly, and Numbers x. shows that the summons to the Jewish assembly was made in the same way. In the actual usage of both *qāhāl* and *ἐκκλησία* this primary idea of summoning is hardly to be felt. They mean simply an assembly of the people, and accordingly in the Revised Version of the Old Testament 'assembly' is the predominant rendering of *qāhāl*.<sup>1</sup>

It is well then to emphasise that every one of the three words used in the phrase 'Holy Catholic Church' has a positive meaning. The very mention of catholicity serves to check any tendency there may be to give a negative meaning to the word 'church.' The idea is of a great world-wide society, whose members are enrolled irrespective of race or colour or station or sex; where there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, bond nor free, where all are one man in Christ Jesus.<sup>2</sup>

The Holy Catholic Church then is a universal holy society. The thought is not of man separated from man, but of man conjoined with man in holiness, in the consciousness of a definite relationship with God and of a share in the divine life and character.

The question has been sometimes discussed whether the Church is to be identified with what Christ repeatedly called the Kingdom of Heaven. Of the Kingdom of Heaven there is frequent mention in the Gospels, but the Church is only twice referred to, or perhaps once. For in the second passage where the

<sup>1</sup> See Hort's *Christian Ecclesia*, Lecture I.      <sup>2</sup> Gal. iii. 28.

expression 'the Church' occurs (St. Matt. xviii. 17), it may well be that the Jewish Church is intended. But while the words, "Let him be unto thee as the *Gentile* and the publican" (v. 17), seem to suggest that it is the Jewish Church which is meant, the whole tenour of the passage rather points to the *Christian* Ecclesia of which mention has already been made in St. Matt. xvi. 18. There St. Peter has just made his great confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus said to him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter (Πέτρος), and upon this rock (πέτρᾳ) I will build my church (οἰκοδομήσω μον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν); and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

It is unfortunate perhaps that the connection of thought between the Church and the Kingdom of Heaven should have to be demonstrated from a passage bristling, as this does, with subjects of controversy. But I think the passage shows conclusively that there is a very close connection between the two, if not an identification. We might perhaps express the distinction in this way. The expression 'Kingdom of Heaven' sets forth the notion of *divine sovereignty*; the expression 'The Church' emphasises *human fellowship* under that sovereignty.

The Church at any rate exists for the realisation of the truth contained in the teaching of the Kingdom of Heaven. This being so, the laws of Christ's kingdom, as given in the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere, become the laws of the Church. Sovereignty implies a right to command, and Christ undoubtedly did command and claimed authority. He claimed authority for the good of the whole world, to make effective for the world the blessings of God's love. It was His one aim to do and to get done the will ( $\theta\epsilon\lambda\eta\mu\alpha$ ) of the Father in heaven. He distinctly repudiated all claims to a kingdom of this world. To Pilate He said: "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." He came, as He told Pilate, to bear witness to the truth, that is, the real meaning of life. He taught His disciples not to seek great things for themselves: "The kings of the Gentiles have lordship over them; and it is those who have authority over them that are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is the greater among you let him become as the younger: and he that is chief as he that doth serve . . . I am in the midst of you as he that serveth."<sup>1</sup> He was the King of men, yet their servant. He triumphed over all the temptations of human kingship (such seems to be the meaning of verse 28), and reigned from His cross to break down the pride and self-will of the world.

We expect to find then in the Sermon on the

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke, xxii. 25 ff.

Mount a setting forth of these same principles of self-sacrifice to guide the action and conduct of the members of the kingdom. And this is exactly what we do find. From first to last the law of the kingdom is self-sacrifice. Self-assertion, resentment, the anger of pride, and contempt of others, these are all out of place. "Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil ( $\tau\hat{\omega}\pi\sigma\eta\rho\hat{\omega}$ ): but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."<sup>1</sup> A paradoxical injunction this; yet its meaning is clear. The law of the Kingdom of Heaven is not 'Get all you can,' but 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'; 'Give all you can'; 'What is mine is thine.'

But it is to be noticed that Christ did not teach that injuries were to be overlooked. In St. Matthew xviii. 15 we read Christ's words: "If thy brother sin against thee, go, shew him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also,

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt., v. 38-42.

let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican." The injury is not to be regarded as personal, so much as an injury done by the brother to himself against his own good; and this injury can only be escaped from by repentance. Punishment inflicted by the Church is for the good of the offender, and not as in the cosmic kingdom for the society looked at apart from the offender. There can be no separation of interests in the society of Christ's Church. Excommunication, the severest punishment the Church can inflict, is for the good of the offender as much as for the good of the society at large. There is a case of excommunication in the New Testament in which the principles of its use are most clearly set forth. Says St. Paul in writing to the Corinthians: "For I verily, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already, as though I were present, judged him that hath so wrought this thing, in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."<sup>1</sup> Nor was the remedial punishment in vain, as we gather from St. Paul's words in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians: "Sufficient to such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the many; so that contrariwise ye should rather forgive him and comfort him, lest by any means such a one should be swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you to confirm your love toward him."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. v. 3 ff.    <sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. ii. 6 ff.    The whole passage is instructive.

It is essential to the spirit of the Christian society that it should set a high value on the individual, that it should recognise the worth of man as man, every man being potentially a child of God. There can therefore be no exclusiveness. They only are excluded who wish to be excluded, those also, who know not that they are excluded by reason of their ignorance, and those whom the society has excluded temporarily as having forfeited the privilege of membership by sin which is unconfessed and not repented of. The Church is essentially Catholic in the broadest sense of the term.

And she is also holy. Her principles are not the principles of the world. She is not cosmic but spiritual, and for the spiritualising of the cosmic. Christ's kingdom and Christ's Church are not of this world.

I know that it may be said that this is all very well in theory, but experience has proved that the Church is very worldly, and that she knows how to use the methods of the world to suit her own purpose. What actually is will be treated of later on. I am now trying to set forth what, as I believe, the Church is ideally according to the will of God, what therefore she can become in God's good time if we will respond to His guidance. I believe that God is calling us to a great reunion of the Church of His Christ, but we must be quite clear about the divine principles of the Church before we can hear the call aright.

Ideally then the Church is a Society of living men indwelt by the Spirit of God, Who imparts to them

the divine life and character, which they are to manifest forth. We are to know God in a great social life or *κοινωνία*. “Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.”<sup>1</sup> If anyone will read the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians he will see that this was St. Paul’s idea of the Church.

In St. Paul the Church is conceived of and likened to a Body, the Body of Christ, He being the Head, and the persons who belong to the Society being the members of that Body. All members have not the same office, but each has a function to perform in the general welfare of the body. The Church then is not an organisation but an organism. Its life is essentially divine. Its mind is the mind of Christ, and the body is animated by the Holy Spirit of God and of His Christ. The body is to “grow up in all things into him, which is the head, even Christ ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.”<sup>2</sup> We observe these last words “in love,” love being that divine gift which results from the divine character. God is Love. We love because He first loved us. The fulness of Christian love results from gratitude. We have no power to originate love ; that power belongs to God alone.

The Church then must have and supply her members with the knowledge of God. Without this there can be no true life. Her teaching must be about God from

<sup>1</sup> 1 John i. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. iv. 15, 16.

Whom are all things and to Whom are all things. She must be able to give men some clue to the mysteries of the universe and of human life. St. Paul says of Christ that in Him "are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden."<sup>1</sup> That they are hidden in Christ does not mean that they cannot be found, for the whole point of St. Paul's reference here is that Christ may be known and so the treasures of wisdom and knowledge may be found.

And in connection with this passage we may consider St. Paul's reference to Christ as the Head of the Church. I think that by Headship is meant something more than sovereignty, though that sovereignty is implied in it is clear from Eph. v. 23, 24: "For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the Church, being himself the saviour of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be also to their husbands in everything."

But the subjection is not a blind subjection. It is the subjection to the Eternal Reason of God which Christ Himself is (St. John i. 1). You cannot separate from Christ's Headship of the Church such expressions as "the mind of Christ." "We have the mind of Christ." "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." 'The mind of Christ' means something more than a certain disposition to humility though it tends to this.

There seems perhaps a certain contradiction between 'the mind of Christ' whose characteristic is humility, and the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

<sup>1</sup> Col. ii. 3.

But this soon disappears. All our knowledge, or science, as we call it, can be and is to be interpreted in Christ. Some when they do not see the connection between science and her discoveries and the Christian doctrine are inclined to resent the intrusion of science, as if she were only "falsely so called." But all that is true in science and the treasures of all science are hidden in Christ. Such at least was the claim made by a first preacher of the Christian doctrine. If that claim cannot make itself good, then Christianity is not the final religion of the world. It will be well to face the fact. We must look for another.

It is a first function of the Christian society to set forth the treasures of wisdom and knowledge as they are discerned in Christ. But this cannot be done unless we have the key to all knowledge which Christ gave in revealing God Himself. But let a man lay hold of the truth about God, His absolute unselfish love, let him realise that God has not one selfish thought, and that this is what Christ revealed, and he will then have entered into the hidden meaning of knowledge.

What is wanted to-day is a great revival of Christian learning; a great interpretation of human truth, if I may call it so, in the light of divine truth. The men of learning must bring their contributions to the understanding of the truth of God as Christ made it known. It is a painful fact that through the self-seeking and self-assertion and the cosmic spirit in man the Church of Christ has been split up into many apparently disconnected parts. But has not a day

come when the great Truth about God shall awaken a nobler spirit in men, and when the Church shall gradually find her way, by a permeation into her of the Truth, to a oneness such as she has never yet known?

The Church must be a home of knowledge; there must be thought and patient waiting for light. But thought, while it is essential to life, the highest life, is not the whole of it. There must be the activity of love, the coming out of ourselves for the good of others. The life of God has been conceived of as one of contemplation. This, if true, is only partially true. The divine life, so far as we are able to understand it (and it can be but little in our low stage of development towards a share in that life), while it may be thought of as one of ceaseless contemplation, is one of ceaseless activity to impart to others the life.

The Church then must be to her members a home of life, if we may use such an expression. She must be able to remove all hindrances to that life, and to bring the life to all her members. Hence the special significance of the two great sacraments of the Gospel, "generally necessary to salvation," Baptism and the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of the Lord.

I am not going to discuss here such questions as whether these two sacraments are a *sine qua non* of the imparting of the divine life, and whether men can afford to neglect them, and whether men will be punished for disobedience to Christ's commands. All such enquiries seem to me to proceed from a very low estimate of the thoughts of God and His great ways. Let a man be persuaded that Christ is what He claimed

to be, and what He has been set forth by the Church to be, the only revealer of God, the one mediator between God and man, Himself both God and man, Who has interpreted to men their own nature as no one ever did before or has been able to do since, let him but see that he has in Christ what no one else can supply, knowledge, forgiveness, life, and the rest will follow.

But we have to take into account that the sphere of man's present life is the State and not the Church. And the virtuous qualities which may result from the Church's teaching of holiness must manifest themselves in the every-day relations of life, public and private. Is the Church more than a school where moral and spiritual truths are taught that may be practised outside ?

The Church indeed would not exist to no purpose if it were nothing more than a collection of individuals bound together by an oath to practise what we may call the virtues of the divine life. But the Church is much more than this ; she has a life as well as a purpose.

It is sometimes said that the Church exists for the salvation of men's souls. And this is true, if rightly understood. But the salvation of the soul has so often seemed to mean an escape from a place of punishment in the next world that the fulness of its meaning has been lost. The Church does not exist to help men to heaven, and to teach them escape from hell. This escaping-punishment theory, as I have already said,

has done, and still does, much harm. From such a theory spring those heinous doctrines such as of works of supererogation, as if so much were required of men to escape hell and to get into heaven, so that when the boundary line is passed everything further is beyond what is necessary. So long as heaven is looked upon as a place of escape from hell, such theories will consciously or unconsciously influence men's minds. But let men see that to be in heaven is to have a share in the divine life and character, and that to cut ourselves off from this by deliberate rejection of that which is revealed to us to be of the essence of that life is hell, then no such theory as that of works of supererogation can find a place in the system of Christian truth.

The Church is not for the salvation of the soul, but for the salvation of the whole man, body, soul and spirit. This comes from knowledge, from self-discipline, from divine grace. The Church exists to be the channel of divine grace to men, to perfect the union of the divine and human. The Divine Spirit, while given to men individually, is given to them in the Society and through the Society. There is no such thing as a Christian in isolation.

Divine worship, which the Church alone provides, is a necessary part of the life of the Church. The administration of the divinely appointed Sacraments whereby provision is made for securing to men the forgiveness of their sins, and the strengthening of themselves by the Body and Blood of Christ, depends upon the Church. In his own unaided strength man

cannot be an "imitator of God," cannot indeed come to know God, but there is a divinely appointed Society in which the Will of God is confessed to be the rule of life, and the Sacraments are duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance. This Society we call the Holy Catholic Church.

The State has to deal with those who profess the divine rule of life and with those who do not; it has to provide for the well-being of the people at large, as the people understand that well-being. Its legislation cannot go beyond popular opinion; its laws must accord with the predominant sentiment. It may be Christian, or it may not. If the State were truly Christian, Church and State would be but two different aspects of the same Society.

But the Church's rule of life is not dependent on popular sentiment. The Church's ministry is for the teaching of the truth of life as it has been revealed in Christ Jesus; it is for helping its members to become sharers more and more in the divine character of love. It is for the ministering of the divine forgiveness and the divine life.

All this helps to give definiteness to what we mean when we speak of the holiness of the Church. The Ideal Church would perfectly exhibit the divine character. It would be at unity with itself as is the Divine Trinity.

The Church is wholly spiritual, the State is partly cosmic. It is important to bear this always in mind. The State must use coercion. She must be self-asserting to some extent. It is, as I understand the

matter, the function of the Church to spiritualise the State by spiritualising the members of the State. Her methods must not be carnal, nor coercive, but persuasive, while she holds up to men the high standard of the Divine Perfection. She has ever to remember that she is the Body of Christ, representing Christ to the world ; and therefore she must represent Him worthily, with meekness and lowliness as He Himself walked on earth among men.

We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the Christian Church has often failed, and failed miserably, because she has forgotten her own spirit. She has taken up with cosmic methods, and has been even in danger of becoming a cosmic state. She has been ready to grasp worldly power, to use coercion, to exalt herself in the ways of the world. We cannot shut our eyes to these things. Yet still the Church goes on, and will go on for ever. It is no new church that is wanted, no schism, which is too often the fruit of pride and self-assertion, but a cleansing of the purposes of the Church of all these centuries, the Church which is still as at the first the Body of Christ indwelt by His Spirit.

The church of the first three centuries, though torn by divisions as the meaning of her own doctrine was being slowly discovered to her by the teaching of the Spirit of God, was yet kept pure from cosmic temptations in part by the cleansing fire of persecution. When at length the world found out that it had something to gain from the Church, it allied itself to her. The Church became corrupted by the world,

learnt its methods, grasped at power, until at last the great disruption of the sixteenth century came about. But the hand of God is to be seen in all history, and though what we call the Reformation was marred by the self-seeking and self-assertion of men, we can see that God was working to free men from fetters which hindered the knowledge of the truth. There can never be for those who have once learnt the blessings of a spiritual freedom a return to the tyranny over intellect and conscience. A church which has any fear of the growth of knowledge is a church of the past and not of the future.

But while the Church has been torn asunder by the cosmic spirit of men, the Divine Spirit has been, according to Christ's promise, leading patient enquirers after truth into truths of nature which need now their interpretation according to the Gospel of Christ. Christianity is on her trial before the world, and she can bear it, if, casting aside the cosmic, she will adhere to the Truth of God. If she is going to hold to rigid and preconceived notions of what Inspiration is, she will get back the answer she deserves: The God who wrote your Bible is not the God who wrote the book of nature. It is the living message that is wanted. And we do not want any infallible pope to utter it forth; we want the courage to let the truth be hammered out, if we may say so. Let men say what they really think. Let them not be anathematised for opinions. If these are wrong, men will learn them to be wrong by a patient putting forth of the truth on the part of those who have made it their own.

*God has not one thought for Himself.* It is a Gospel to change the world. It sets character before everything else as the test of truth, and this is strictly according to Christ's own teaching. Self-sacrifice and the being renewed from the cosmic to the spiritual, this is the end of true religion. If this end is not reached, or at any rate approximated to, our religion is a failure. "Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Let it not be thought that I am advocating the substitution of philanthropy for religion. Any doctrine of life, any practice of life which leaves God out of account, seems to me wholly insufficient. I do not suggest the substitution of the love of man for the love of God. What we want is more of the love of God, and to get that we must see God as Christ has revealed Him to us as Perfect Love. God is worthy to be loved, and must be loved when we know what He is.

*God has not one thought for Himself.* I know that this thought can do great things. It is the Truth which can make us free. Let this thought be laid hold of by a few, let it be believed, let it be repeated, let it be lived but not stereotyped in words, and we are already one step nearer to the reunion of Christendom. Let our Church of England gather together all Christians in this land and make them one in this thought, let reunion begin at home, and we shall be stronger to do God's work in

the wider world as a missionary church. Let the thought given by the Church to the nation permeate our national life. It will solve many social problems and reconcile many conflicting interests.

I do not underrate the magnitude of the difficulties of reunion, but they can be overcome if once Christians can persuade themselves that it is the divine will, and therefore possible. It is the cosmic spirit in us all that has to be cast out. Let the Church understand her functions as distinguished from those of the State. Let her be content to perform those functions and not trespass where she has no call to go, and the relation between Church and State in this land will soon settle itself.

*God has not one thought for Himself.* Let us repeat this truth of the Divine Holiness to ourselves every day. It can bring about the new heaven and the new earth.

It is quite clear that this thought about God may require the surrender of many former views and the modification of many more. Only so can the diverse thoughts of the Christian world to-day be gathered together in the truth. But the thought is not revolutionary. It is essentially constructive. The demands which it will make on every man who accepts it as true will be to him a practical proof of its truth. In this truth we shall find that we have not only in theory, but in actual practice, a redemption of human life from sin and selfishness.

“Now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also the

heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain."

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